

THE
**LABOUR
MONTHLY**

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 14

November, 1932

Number 11

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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Mass Struggle
AND
Militant Unity**

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Published at

7 JOHN STREET, Theobald's Road, LONDON, W.C. 1.

The Labour Monthly

Editorial and Publishing Offices :

7 JOHN STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

Telephone : HOLBORN 6656.

¶ The Editor of *The Labour Monthly* invites contributions. He cannot, however, be held responsible for MSS. sent to him, or undertake to enter into correspondence regarding rejected contributions, although every endeavour will be made to return the same when a stamped and addressed envelope for that purpose is enclosed.

1932 : *Subscription Rates*

[PAID IN ADVANCE]

British Isles :

One year - 7/- Six months - 3/6

Abroad :

One year 8/- or \$2.00 Six months 4/- or \$1.00

American Subscription Representative :—Philip Novick, 270 Broadway, Suite 1401, New York, N.Y., U.S.A.

The Labour Monthly is also obtainable wholesale from Workers' Bookshop, 16 King Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2.

Advertisement Rates : £8 os. od. per cover page and pro rata. £5 os. od. per text page and pro rata ($\frac{1}{8}$ th page minimum).

BOUND VOLUMES

<i>Volume I</i>	£5	os. od.	<i>Volume VIII</i>	15s. 6d.
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Loose copies of last five volumes can be exchanged for a bound volume for 4s. 6d. Single loose copies are available of almost every issue of *The Labour Monthly* since 1921.

The articles in *The Labour Monthly* are indexed in the International Index to Periodicals, New York, N.Y., as well as in the annual index in each December issue.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

*Fifteenth Anniversary—Fruits of Revolution—What to Learn
—Tsarism in England—Mass-Struggle and Revolution—
Government Terrorism—National Government Policy—
The Meaning of “Economy”—Economists and Economy
—“Let the Rich Guzzle, Let the Hungry Starve”
—Force and More Force—Police Offensive—
Birkenhead—Witnesses’ Evidence—Liberalism
in the Grave—Labour Complicity—Labour-
National Unity Against Unemployed—
Strengthen United Workers’ Front—
Towards Wider Militant Unity*

IN the midst of deepening struggles in Britain and throughout the world, on the eve of heavier struggles which will call to the test all the forces of the working class, we greet this month a great anniversary, the fifteenth year of the Bolshevik Revolution, the completion of fifteen years of workers’ power and the building of socialism. At the present day even the liberal bourgeoisie (and therefore, also, of course their “socialist” echoes) acclaim the triumphs of socialist construction in the Soviet Union; even the blindest are compelled to open their eyes to the new chapter in human history that has opened; and even the stupidest capitalists look ruefully at the contrast of their own chaos and confusion with the mighty ordered advance of socialist planning. But all these try to leave out of account or to bury out of mind one fact about the whole achievement, the biggest and simplest fact, and the most important to all of us in the rest of the world. That fact is that all this achievement is built upon a single definite base—the base of a revolution, of the workers’ revolution. Not a revolution in some metaphysical, metaphorical, allegorical sense, as our fashionable socialists, self-styled “communists” and even “Marxists” now so much in vogue, love to chatter about. But a revolution in a plain, exact, material sense, exactly as Marx described it—the forcible overthrow by the workers of the existing state power, and the establishment of the workers’ armed power.

ALL the wonderful creative, constructive work, which to-day arouses the admiration and the envy of the scientists, engineers, educationists, doctors and social reformers of the West ; all the seeming miracles of economic transformation and dynamic achievement ; all the triumphs of collective culture, education, a new way of living, release of energy, release of youth : all are the flowering from this one root. And for the same reason in capitalist Europe and America all the limitless resources and accumulated wealth, all the technique and unparalleled productive mechanism, all the skill and training of millions of workers, and all the science, accumulated knowledge and organising experience, result only in misery, want, conflict, cutting down of all constructive and cultural effort, decaying plant and decaying human beings, for the lack of this one factor. This is the fact we need to burn into the consciousness of all during these anniversary celebrations. Not merely the celebration of socialist achievement and of the power of socialism ; not merely the demonstration that socialism can here also provide the way out ; but the sharp, urgent necessity of revolution in our own country ; the explaining what revolution means, what the workers' seizure of power means, in plain concrete terms ; the determination to fight for the workers' revolution, which alone gives meaning and aim to all the present struggles—this is the spirit and understanding and aim we need to awaken in thousands and millions of workers who are to-day faced with bitter struggles for bread under the conditions of the capitalist crisis.

ALL the liberal-socialist applauders of the present constructive achievements in the Soviet Union endeavour to bury or deny the universal significance of the Bolshevik Revolution. But just this is what is important for other countries to learn. The Five-Year Plan—this they consider universal, and long to transfer to Western Europe and America. But the revolution they endeavour to minimise and explain away as only local in its significance, a product of special circumstances, a Russian phenomenon, a product of

Tsarism and of an undeveloped working class movement, without wider significance or application for the advanced countries of the West, with their bourgeois-democratic institutions and liberties, and highly-developed labour movements and social legislation, and generally superior economic and social standards. The exact reverse is the case. The process of extreme accelerated industrialisation, which necessarily underlay and dominated the first Five-Year Plan, has only the most limited bearing for the extremely different conditions of Western Europe and America, where industrialisation is already strongly developed. But the principles of the working class revolution, the methods and tactics of a Marxist working class movement, the rôle of a revolutionary workers' party, the strategy of the conquest of power, the principles underlying the dictatorship of the proletariat and its form of realisation through the soviets—this is what Western Europe and America need to learn from the example of the Bolshevik Revolution, these are the factors wherein Western Europe and America are backward.

THE boasted “superiorities” and “differences” dwindle more and more, the basic issues of class power stand out ever more bare, as the present crisis extends. Where now are the “democratic” institutions in Germany, for the sake of which the Second International leaders bade the millions of German workers and soldiers, when they held power in their hands in 1918, sacrifice the social revolution that was in their grasp? The fate of the Weimar Constitution, of “the freest republic in the world,” is a warning lesson to the workers of every country how much trust to place in these “democratic” forms. The “democratic” forms are stripped and thrown aside in country after country, as the struggle deepens. The vaunted edifice of social legislation is torn down piece by piece and replaced by draconian legislation against the workers. The “highly organised” social-democratic and trade union movements have left the workers helpless and defenceless before the blows of capital, have led them to defeat after defeat and to worsened conditions without equal.

The mass of the workers are faced with the barest struggle for bread, and in this struggle are confronted with all the apparatus of capitalist violence. In the streets of Belfast the masses of workers demonstrate, crying "We want bread," and are met with bullets. Is all this so different from Tsarism?

THE revolution develops out of the mass struggle. *The present mass struggles for limited immediate aims are the gathering of the forces of the workers, the gathering of experience, the training and preparation for coming revolutionary struggles. The smallest strike, though it is but in a single department of a works for a few hours for the smallest objective, now takes on its special significance at the present stage in relation to the rising wave of struggle and to the big issues in front.* The workers are advancing to the fight, are finishing with the passive acceptance of the crisis and of the blows of the crisis. Every sign and expression of this is of the utmost importance for the development of the fight, for the awakening of revolutionary consciousness. In contrast to the social-democratic leaders, of the Labour Party and the I.L.P., who are at present preaching the "hopelessness" and "futility" of all partial limited struggles in relation to the scale of the crisis, to which "only socialism" can be the solution, it is on the contrary just these partial struggles that are the indispensable revolutionising force and process, drawing in ever-wider numbers of workers and awakening them to the issues of the fight, to a clear seeing of the class enemy and of the conditions of successful struggle. But this does not mean that the mass struggle of itself automatically grows and develops to revolutionary issues. On the contrary. Without revolutionary guidance and leadership the present rising wave of struggle can come to nothing, will only wrest a handful of concessions from the Government, the employers and the local councils, and will then spend its forces, or be led into deliberate and prepared defeat by the social-democratic leadership. On the rôle and activity of the revolutionary vanguard depends the decisive task, in and through the limited struggles to bring out the bigger issues, to make the fight against the particular employer

or the particular administrative rule a conscious part of the fight against capitalism, to awaken revolutionary consciousness and determination, and to develop from each struggle lasting organisation.

THE present rising wave of mass struggle in Britain, expressed in the unemployed demonstrations, in the strike movement and in the gathering militant movements among the workers, reveals a stage and a character new and not previously reached in the development of the working class in Britain. This new character of the struggle, reflecting the unprecedented extent of the capitalist crisis, is revealed alike on the side of the workers and on the side of the government and capitalist forces. On the side of the workers is revealed ever more strongly, beneath the immediate defensive forms of the fight, *a rising offensive spirit*, a spirit of challenge to the whole crisis and to the economic arguments of capitalism, a determination to face and resist unbroken the coercive apparatus of capitalism, and a growing consciousness of strength which has already begun to wrest concessions from capitalism and returns to the struggle with only the greater impetus. At the same time the Government is meeting the rising struggle with an extreme violence and brutality, which recalls Chartist days rather than the more recent epoch of British capitalism in relation to the working class movement, and which begins to point to a line of *terrorism* as a definite line that is being pursued. Of the first character, of the rising offensive spirit in the present wave of struggle, we had occasion to write last month. It is now necessary to deal more closely with the policy of the National Government in relation to the struggle, and its significance, and the lessons we need to draw, for the further development of the struggle.

WHAT is the policy of the National Government and Capitalism? The National Government and Capitalism have no constructive policy for the crisis. They can have no constructive policy for the crisis. Since the very character of the crisis is the superabundance of wealth

and the means of production on the one hand, and the starvation and unemployment of the masses on the other, it is obvious that the only constructive policy can be to organise production and the work of all to meet the needs of all, and this can only be accomplished by breaking the fetters of private property. The National Government which exists to maintain private property, can only follow the line of capitalism, to drive down the workers still further in order to maintain profits in a dwindling market, and in order to try to force an advantage against other countries, to pursue trade wars and tariff wars, with the implication of ultimate armed war. The crisis deepens ; the last export figures for September mark a new low record, the unemployment figures a new high record. The Economy campaign, so far from being reversed, goes forward. The Unemployment Insurance Commission prepares its report for placing new imposts upon the backs of the workers; steps are being taken to establish a centralised bureaucratic machine for administering the Means Test (behind a screen of a show of concessions) when some local committees begin to show signs of wavering under mass pressure ; the Ottawa agreements bring taxes on all the elementary foodstuffs ; new wage-cut demands are pressed forward in textiles, railways, transport and a host of other industries ; the Rail Pool prepares to sack 40,000 more railwaymen ; the whole drive of " economy " and rationalisation goes forward.

A SEARCHLIGHT on the meaning of " economy " *i.e.*, of present capitalist policy, is thrown by the recent correspondence in the *Times* (October 17) of all the leading economists on the grave problem : Whether the Rich should economise ? Needless to say, the answer is a hearty and unanimous negative from all these " expert " lackeys. But indeed the discussion is superfluous. It is only necessary to turn to the other pages of the same issue of the same journal to see the answer displayed in practice, when this same grave organ of " economy," which grudges the payment of two shillings a week to keep a child barely alive and finds this " very generous " (October 10, 1932) but

ruin to the taxpayer, with its other voices at the same time invites its readers with all the incitement of lavish display to purchase a motor car for £1,100 (p. 2), a fur for £103 (p. 19), a "small country residence" for £4,000 (p. 24) or a "town house" for £7,000 (p. 23), to note for their entertainment a long "Season's List" of "Hunt and County Balls" (p. 15), or to go for a sea-cruise ("Winter Sunshine Holiday—Away from Britain's Worst Season") in "latest luxury liners" round the world for £221 (p. 2), or to engage an extra "upper housemaid" for families such as the following :

Hants, one lady, five indoor servants ; Hunts, three family, six servants ; Suffolk, two family, six servants ; Surrey, three family, five servants ; Portman Square, three family (titled), seven servants. (P. 3.)

The true policy of the *Times* is more clearly to be discerned in its other columns than in its editorial Podsnappery. Meanwhile, while "five indoor servants" tend to the needs of "one lady," we read the following typical news item out of dozens (not in the *Times*) :

"Everything is in pawn, there are no clothes for the baby expected next week. A table had to be broken up for fuel."

So said a detective at Marylebone Police Court, when Walter Oliver May, 50, was charged on his own confession, with stealing 12s. 1d. from a gas-meter at his home.

When formally charged, May remarked : "Quite right, I had to do something. My children were starving."

The family occupy three rooms at 15s. a week, but the rent is £11 in arrears, and proceedings are pending in the County Court for their ejectment.

A different kind of "family" from the "two family, six servants" of the *Times* advertisements.

MAKE a composite picture of the above facts, multiplied a thousandfold for the whole country, and you have the picture of Britain to-day, the true picture of the Policy of the National Government, which MacDonald (thirty-one years applauded Leader of the Labour Party) proclaims in unctuous tones on that same day, October 17 :

The man who is the friend of the unemployed is the man who tells them the state of the national resources, and who is prepared himself to share in that diminution of income and make the best he can under the law of circumstances. (MacDonald after Trocadero Restaurant Luncheon, October 17, 1932.)

Needless to say, the professional economists find all this admirable and as it should be. Their opinion would not in any case make any difference to the practice ; but they have, after all, to perform their function as the modern-style clergymen of the pirate ship, and give their official "economic" blessing to the orgy over the dead men's bones of a perishing people. Therefore they come out in a solemn collective declaration :

The public interest in present conditions does not point towards private economy ; to spend less money than we should like to do is not patriotic.

Signed : Keynes, Stamp, Layton, Salter, Macgregor (Economics Professor at Oxford), Pigou (Economics Professor at Cambridge).

IT is worth while to pause a moment at his contrast in the whole "economy" campaign ; for we are here at the root of the policy, or rather, the inevitable contradiction of capitalism, which finds its practical expression, not in the spiritual tones of a MacDonald or the academic phrases of an economists' memorandum, but in a policeman's baton. "The public interest in present conditions does not point towards private economy." Every one of these economists has demanded that the wages of the workers must be brought down, that the starveling benefit of the unemployed must be cut down ; Stamp as rail chief is engaged in demanding that the railwayman's minimum must be brought down to 38s. "To spend less money than we should like is not patriotic." Is there an inconsistency ? Within the laws of capitalism, none. The contradiction is not in these economists, but in capitalism, whose faithful servants they are, and whose laws they proclaim in all their barbarous anarchy with the docile fidelity of a slaveowner's foreman. There is too

much abundance. The masses need. But the surplus belongs to the capitalists. Therefore the capitalists must consume more. That is the only solution. Such is the law of capitalism, as these prophets proclaim it. The rich, who have more than they need, must consume more. The workers, who have produced the wealth and live in need, must consume less. Economy is not for the rich, but for the poor. Such is the final wisdom of bourgeois economics, proclaimed by these liberal, humane and civilised gentlemen, amid the applause of their wealthy patrons. "Let the rich guzzle, and let the hungry go short." That is the sum of their science in humanity's hour of trial. Did it then need our six Wise Men of Gotham, expensively trained and expensively maintained, to produce this pearl of wisdom? This wisdom England—landlord-capitalist-imperialist-slaveowning England—has already long known and practised. The hour has struck for a different kind of wisdom, the wisdom of the workers, which will be easier for all to understand without the intricacies of experts, since it will direct production to meet needs.

THE National Government, compelled to maintain this inevitable policy of capitalism in crisis, compelled in the face of plenty to drive down the masses to want and to the edge of starvation, can only endeavour to maintain this policy by force and by ever greater doses of force. This is the heart of the present situation. The recent police actions of the last few months have begun to take on a character which goes beyond the traditional coercive action against the demonstrations of the workers. They have begun to take on an aggressive, violent, openly lawless character, whose objective is manifestly, not merely to break resistance, but to overawe, to *terrorise*. It is impossible to describe otherwise such action as that of the police in Birkenhead, attested by hundreds of witnesses, in raiding by night whole streets of the working class quarters, smashing in the windows with their batons, breaking in on the sleeping occupants, striking with their batons right and left, men, women and children, the aged and

the infirm, and then carrying off their prisoners, unconscious and streaming with blood. This activity is not new to the British ruling class—in Ireland, in India, in the colonies. But it is new in the metropolitan country, and it marks a new stage in the class struggle.

THE nearest previous approach to this was in the General Strike, with the provocative display of superior armed force in every form and wholesale arrests. Nevertheless in the General Strike the endeavour was still to maintain to the greatest extent possible the appearance of peaceful relations between the police and the masses, to encourage by all possible means the press-myth of “friendly relations.” All this mythology has gone by the board. The deliberate Cossack method, the aim to strike terror, has been chosen in its place. This has been increasingly visible during recent months, and strongly through the Lancashire strike, with the activity of the mounted police. It showed itself already at Castleford where occurred the death of Comrade Speight, aged 62. It has shown itself again and again in the bloody police charges and assaults all over the country, in North Shields, in West Ham, in London—where the police, not satisfied with driving the demonstrators into the neighbouring houses for refuge, whose owners readily gave them shelter from the police fury, followed this up by battering at the houses to secure their prey (no doubt, also a part of “clearing the traffic”). The Craigavon Government in Belfast, the garrison government of British Imperialism in Ireland, has only made the policy of its masters the more clear and open, with its armoured cars and machine guns, its shooting and killing of workers.

LET us look a little more closely at Birkenhead. A Report was recently issued of the Depressed Areas Inquiry by Liverpool University, under government auspices, as to unemployment in the Merseyside and the prospect of a permanent surplus. It was found that in 1930, before the present crisis had taken effect, of 381,000 insured workers

28.1 per cent. were unemployed, and that of those employed only 31 per cent. were engaged in actual production, the remainder being engaged in transport, distribution and services. Capitalism could thus not find use for as much as three-fourths of the available workers, and of these less than one-third, or under one-fourth of the total, for actual production. Not one-fourth in actual production, in the midst of desperate conditions, overcrowding and need of all the workers ; and it is estimated that even with extensive " recovery " there will be a permanent " unabsorbed surplus " of 90,000. Capitalism thus forcibly keeps the workers from production. Having done so, it treats them as criminals. Unemployed single men were to exist on 12s. a week. Driven by need, ten thousand unemployed workers in Birkenhead demonstrate to present their demands ; a deputation puts their demands before the Public Assistance Committee, the barest demands for existence, for an increased rate, for coal, for boots, for clothes. What is the answer ? The police are set upon them. All the witnesses agree as to the fully peaceful character of the demonstration until the police attack began ; only in the face of attack, the workers were driven to resist, and by their resistance showed their solidarity and determination, and extracted the concessions that were won. On peaceful demonstrations of unarmed workers, without defence and under-nourished, hordes of armed police, specially drafted in, are let loose to make their baton-charges, until the scene is of a " battlefield." Then follows the vengeance of the succeeding nights, the " nights of terror " in the working class quarters.

THE International Labour Defence has held its inquiry in Birkenhead, and issued its report. We quote from the typical statements of witnesses in that report ; the first is from Mrs. Davin, wife of an ex-Serviceman invalided out of the Army and crippled with operations :

On Friday, September 16, the police came at midnight to the houses in St. Anne's Street, smashing windows back and front with batons, entering houses and batoning the occupants, frightening the women and children. This lasted till 4 o'clock in the morning.

That was the first night. There follows the second :

On Saturday, September 17, further midnight baton attacks were made in St. Anne's Street, Payson Street, and Kittoria Street, when the screaming of the women and children was pitiful.

Men were fighting back, but were later overwhelmed and arrested and bundled in the waiting " Black Marias."

There follows the third night :

But the worst night of all was Sunday midnight, about 1.30, September 18. We were fast asleep in bed, at Morpeth Buildings, having had no sleep the two previous nights and my husband was very poorly. My old mother, 68 and paralysed, could not sleep, she was so terrified.

I have five children, a daughter 19, one 15, a son, 17, one 12, and one 6. Suddenly my old mother screeched, she is unable to speak. We were all awakened at the sound of heavy motor vehicles, which turned out to be " Black Marias."

Lights in the houses were lit, windows opened to see what was going on. Policemen bawled out " Lights out !" and " Pull up those — windows."

Hordes of police came rushing up the stairs, doors commenced to be smashed in, the screams of women and children was terrible. We could hear the thuds of the blows from the batons.

Presently our doors were bashed by heavy instruments.

My husband got out of bed without waiting to put his trousers on, and unlocked the door. As he did so, 12 police rushed the room, knocking him to the floor, his poor head being split open, kicking him as he lay. We were all in our night-clothes. The language of the police was terrible. I tried to prevent them hitting my husband.

They then commenced to baton me all over the arms and body. As they hit me and my Jim, the children and I were screaming, and the police shouted " Shut up, you parish-fed bastards !"

Such are the relations of British Capitalism to its workers in 1932, whom it has first robbed of the means of existence, and then punishes for the crime of being robbed (" parish-fed bastards ").

AND " Liberal " " Progressive " " Labour " England —where is that, while all this goes on ? Not a sound, not a sign of indignation or resistance. On the contrary. The Labour Party takes up the question—but how ? On September 20, after the events above described,

the *Daily Herald* comes out with an editorial on “ Fomenting Disorder ” :

The Communists who are busy fomenting disorder in Birkenhead and elsewhere. . . .

and ends with a sage counsel against “ violence ”—to whom ? To the police ? No : to the workers.

Against violence, against disorder as a reply to oppression, the British Labour Movement has always set its face.

Note well : “ as a reply to oppression.” *Not* against violence in general ; not against police violence, not against imperialist violence and murderous assaults on unarmed populations, practised by the Labour Government ; against this the Labour Party has never “ set its face.” But only against the resistance of the oppressed to violence ; this is the crime in the eyes of the Labour Party ; this they strive to strangle and paralyse, and so to aid the police.

ONCE again, three weeks later, the *Daily Herald* editorial of October 7 returns to the attack, revealing the rising fear and alarm of the Labour Party at the gathering mass movement :

The signs of social discontent continue to grow in number and gravity and to take on uglier forms.

Demonstrations, marches, riots and police charges have become disquietingly familiar in the great industrial centres of the country.

A situation is developing more serious than anything known in this generation, and so deplorable that it must cause the deepest disquiet to all who care for a decent Britain.

However much disorder is exploited by those who hope to profit by it, it is impossible any longer for even the blind to attribute that disorder to “ agitators ” and “ sinister forces.”

Once again “ disorder ”—not of the police, but of the workers. “ Disorder is exploited by those who hope to profit by it.” Such is the tone of the Labour Party. And the Leader of the Labour Party, Lansbury, writes to the *Times* to express his alarms (October 10, 1932) :

At long last the patience of the unemployed is exhausted. Twelve years of ever-increasing degradation, starvation, penury and destitution have done their work ; violent clashes with the police are taking place throughout the land.

What, then, does the Leader of the Labour Party propose? To attempt to resuscitate the truly antique trick, well-known also to Tsarism, to turn aside the unrest into a religious channel:

Is there no religious leader in our land who, in the name of the Founder of our Faith, will come out and lead a crusade against these man-made evils? . . .

Who is there among the leaders of Christendom who will in the name of the Master, organise and lead such a campaign of prayer and action as will compel Parliament to act? . . .

I will join any leader of any denomination who will come out and lead a great crusade, not for charity, but for justice.

In the year 1932, with the proletarian revolution victorious over one-sixth of the earth, with the mass-struggle rising throughout the world to approaching revolutionary issues, the Labour Party prays for a Father Gapon.

MORE. The Labour Party "raises" the question of the unemployed demonstrations and police-clashes in Parliament. But in what way? In order to complain against the Government having made concessions to the demonstrations, in order to complain that the authority of the Communists has thus been heightened, and the task of the Labour Party made more difficult to hold in the workers. Listen to Lansbury:

The respect for political democracy was in danger of being wiped out. At Birkenhead after the riots a great concession was made to the men who had demonstrated, and in Belfast the same thing had happened.

The "left" Buchanan speaks in the best *Morning Post* fashion of the Communists as "political agitators" seeking "to promote trouble" in order to "serve their own ends." Finally, the Deputy Leader, Sir Stafford Cripps, speaks with complete clearness:

Members of the Labour Party who had been working in Bristol had been doing their utmost to try to get the unemployed away from the evil influences of the Communists. It was a tremendous task. What were they to say to the unemployed of Bristol who pointed to Birkenhead? When they told the unemployed that they could

achieve nothing by rioting, they were met at once by the argument of what happened at Birkenhead and Belfast. Was anybody going to convince an unemployed man who was told by a Communist that the way in which he could force relief out of a local authority was by rioting that these concessions had not been given as the result of force ?

If only the Prime Minister would give some expression of his intentions, it would assist those people who were trying to preserve law and order in the country.

This is the direct appeal from the Labour Party to MacDonald in the common front against the unemployed demonstrators and the Communists, that is, against the workers, or " rioters " as the Labour Right Honourables prefer to call them. MacDonald lost no time to respond :

Mr. MacDonald said he would respond most readily. He recognised fully that Sir S. Cripps and his immediate associates held precisely the same views as he did on the question.

I hope none of us will make statements which will allow those responsible for the organisation of those demonstrations to be regarded as the beneficiaries of the unemployed people in this country.

(*Times* report October 20, 1932.)

" Beneficiaries of the unemployed " is an obscure phrase, but possibly MacDonald meant " benefactors." At any rate the general sense is perfectly clear. The Labour Party and the National Government will help one another to try to keep the unemployed in hand, to prevent concessions being made to " rioting," and to keep down Communist, *i.e.*, revolutionary influence.

THIS is the situation which we have now to meet. The Government, faced with the gathering storm, is preparing on the one hand to announce a show of concessions on the Means Test (not abolition). At the same time it is strengthening the police offensive, with the fullest incitement to violence, to break the workers' resistance and to destroy in practice the workers' rights of demonstration and freedom of meeting. We have to strengthen the workers' front to meet this. *Only the strengthening of the workers' united front can defeat this offensive.* The demonstrations of

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the past months have achieved much. But they have been left too heavily to the unemployed to fight their own battles alone. The unity of the unemployed and employed workers is now essential for advance. The employed workers are faced no less heavily with the capitalist attacks. The growth of their movement of revolt is shown in the strike movement, in the opposition movements in the unions, in the strike ballots. But they still remain heavily divided in sections and sectional interests. The Lancashire example has shown the success of capitalism in dividing and keeping apart the weavers and the spinners, faced with an identical struggle, and whose combined fight could have extorted victory. But this goes on all along the line; and the division of employed and unemployed is only the final and largest example of the capitalist policy of division of the workers in this country (which in fact is carried yet a stage further with the division of the British workers and the colonial workers).

HOW is this to be overcome? Only by unity in the struggle. But the achievement of unity in the struggle presupposes the unity of the militant class-conscious elements to prepare and organise the struggle. That is still not adequately present, for the range of the Minority Movement, which seeks to unite the militant sections, is still too limited. As against the handful of individual militants and militant branches in the existing Minority Movement, there are tens of thousands of militant workers all over the country, of militant branches and sections in the unions, of groups of fighters in the factories and among the unemployed. These must come together on the basis of the immediate struggle. We must smash down all isolationist sectional separation of interests; the urgency of the times does not permit of such. Alongside the particular fight in each factory, in each union, in each industry, must come the general fight of the workers. Such a united front must be built up in the first place locally. Ultimately it must lead to a wide national movement, a mass revolutionary opposition, strongly based in the unions and in the factories, and among the unemployed, and conducting

a common struggle. This is not only a question of organisation, of linking up. It is a question of strengthening the general class slogans, of breaking down the particularism of separate craft, sectional and industrial barriers, which is still strong even among many of the militant workers, and deepening and strengthening the consciousness of the common class struggle, of the fight against the common class enemy. In this way we shall not only strengthen the immediate present struggles, including the necessary sectional struggles, but we shall build up in action an invincible front for the gigantic issues which we know are before us, the issues of war and of the revolutionary struggle. Towards these tasks we may look to the Twelfth Communist Congress, which meets this month at Battersea, to give its lead for all the workers.

R. P. D.

FIFTEEN YEARS OF SOVIET POWER

By R. W. ROBSON

THIS month the working people of the U.S.S.R. are celebrating the successful achievement of the first Five Year Plan, which has been carried out in four years. On the basis of this success the second Five Year Plan will be launched with the object of raising the whole material standards of the masses, the abolition altogether of classes, and the realisation of Socialism.

In 1928 when the first Five Year Plan was launched, Russia was still far behind the chief capitalist countries so far as heavy industry was concerned, and the old class relations still remained powerful in the villages, among the huge peasant population. To-day the Soviet Union holds second place in the world as a country with a powerful basic industry.

In the past four years the general budget of the Soviet Union has increased from 11 to 28 billions of roubles. The productive capacity of industry has *doubled*; factories of a size hitherto unknown have grown up everywhere; the number of industrial workers has increased from about eleven millions to twenty-one millions; two-thirds of the peasantry are organised in Collective Farms, providing a strong basis for the complete mechanisation of agriculture in the course of the next few years and destroying the base of capitalism in the village.

The Soviet Oil Industry is second in importance only to that of the U.S.A., Soviet Iron and Steel Industry possesses giants such as Magnitostroy which beat anything in capitalist Europe and are rivalled only in the U.S.A. Production of iron has outstripped every capitalist country except America, the Soviet Union has risen from seventh to second place as a producer of basic metal.

By 1931 the area sown for Cotton had increased to 2,300,000 hectares (more than double); similarly with Sugar; the production of Sugar grew from 770,000 hectares to 1,500,000 hectares in 1931. The area sown for grain was 70 million hectares in 1928, in 1931 it had increased to 138 millions. The grain problem has been solved. The commercial production of grain in 1931 was 35 to 40 per cent. in excess of pre-war figures.

In the sphere of electrification the greatest victories have been achieved. Everyone has heard of Dnieprostroy, which even the capitalist press has recently featured. Dnieprostroy is unique of its kind, a symbol

of the new life growing up in the Land of the Soviets. But Dnieprostroy will soon have three even more powerful brothers, when new plants now under construction will jointly give twenty times as much power to the Socialist state as Dnieprostroy.

The new power plants are designed to overcome the scourge of drought which has for ages devastated the Volga regions periodically; with the vast power at its command, Socialism will produce artificial irrigation over a great area, commanding the snowfall both as to time and quantity, to a large degree. During the period of 1921 to 1931 the Soviet Union lost 2,750,000 poods of grain and cattle to the value of £450,000 through drought; the overcoming of this great problem is thus seen to be of the utmost importance. Moscow is to be linked with the Volga and so to the sea, by canal. This will increase the depth of the Moscow river by 40 feet!

Reference has already been made to the mechanisation of agriculture. There are now 150,000 tractors operating in the Soviet Union. In 1929-30 42,000 tractors were supplied to agriculture, of which only 14,000 were made in the Soviet Union. In 1931, 70,000 tractors were supplied, of which 35,000 were made in the Soviet Union, and in 1932 the Soviet factories are meeting all requirements themselves, estimated at 90,000 tractors! These figures indicate the tremendous strides made in this important sphere of industry.

The Soviet Union is now able to meet all its tractor requirements from its own factories, and by the end of 1937 plans to have in operation no less than 700,000 tractors. The synthetic production of rubber has been solved also, and the big new chemical works are playing an increasingly important rôle in supplying fertilisers, &c., for agriculture. The Soviet air fleet has steadily grown, and has been extended to cover the journey from Moscow to Vladivostock.

The U.S.S.R. has become a land of huge factories, equipped with the most up-to-date technical machinery. It is the land of Tractors and Automobiles. In all things of essential importance, the Soviets are now economically completely independent of the capitalist world.

Illiteracy has been abolished, elementary education for every child has been established, a million and a half students are going through secondary and technical educational courses. The Soviet Union is no longer a backward country. In many respects it is now ahead of the capitalist world. The death rate has been reduced to half what it was in Czarist days, the general health of the people is unquestionably higher than in capitalist countries. Already some diseases, formerly chronic (small-pox, cholera, &c.) have been stamped out. The cultural standards of the people are rising rapidly; the whole country is feverishly anxious to learn.

The great development made possible with the success of the first Five Year Plan has created the foundation for the second Five Year Plan, which will raise the living standards of the masses by two-and-a-half to three times, enormously improve the cultural standard of the people, and completely sweep away the remnants of classes in the land. Socialism will be achieved.

Anyone who knows even a little about industry, will appreciate immediately the seriousness of the problem of developing some millions of industrial workers from the ranks of peasants who had never before seen even the most elementary kind of machine. Special steps had to be taken to meet this difficulty. The problem of fluctuation of labour also had serious effects on the planned carrying through of quotas and the staffing of the factories. With the abolition of unemployment and the actual existence of a shortage of labour, particularly of experienced industrial workers, workers inevitably tended to go from job to job, either because of attraction due to some betterment of their conditions or because of a desire merely to move on. Steps were taken to cope with this problem which was serious in its effects; here the famous Six Points of Stalin were decisively important, as they laid down the method of approach to this and related issues which were the root of the problem.

More than twenty new industrial towns have been built on sites in previously deserted plains, around new factories. The cities have become ever more crowded as literally hundreds of thousands of new workers have flocked into the new factories. In Moscow alone there is an average influx of 250,000 people a year, in addition to the normal increase of population. Imagine the problem created in housing alone! But the transport of supplies for the new factories, of food for the growing cities, added to the other problems inevitably led to difficulties with the railways, and occasionally, a temporary shortage of certain commodities.

In 1913 the Railways transported 134.4 million tons; in 1930 the Soviet Railways handled 240 million tons, and in 1931 this figure was considerably increased, in addition to the transporting of hundreds of millions of passengers.

Every worker in the Soviet Union knew that hardships were due to growth of their country's industries, and were being energetically combated by the Soviet power, but the capitalist press magnified and distorted the truth, and did its best to spread abroad the impression that the people of the Soviet Union were starving and suffering terribly in other ways—that the Five Year Plan was a failure.

An additional and main cause of shortage of certain commodities such as shoes and clothing, is the fact of the awakening of a desire for better things in the minds of the masses of the Soviet Union. Their Communist Party is educating them to higher standards, and they want more

shoes, better housing, and household effects. For example, before the war 25 million pairs of shoes met Russian requirements ; to-day 80 million pairs are totally insufficient, the peasant won't go on wearing the old type of basket woven shoe, he has both the means and the desire for leather shoes.

The clothing factories have naturally had to wait until the basic industries' needs were met ; now, with the main objective achieved, light industry will be speeded up in order to meet the increasing demands of the masses for these commodities.

These difficulties, forseen by the leadership of the workers, rendered necessary the rationing system which the bourgeois and socialist enemies of the Soviets have howled so much about. This working class measure was the guarantee to all workers that they would get enough, that their interests as workers would be paramount, and would be safeguarded.

The struggle to achieve the successful fulfilment of the first Five Year Plan has been a hard and bitter one ; added to all the technical problems, big enough obstacles in themselves, was the need for tireless vigilance against the sabotage and hostility of internal enemies, as well as the ever present menace of capitalist attack from without.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat enabled the working class to vanquish its enemies and overcome all obstacles, under the guidance of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The firm leadership of Joseph Stalin, "the best disciple of Lenin," enabled the Party and the working class to maintain its steady determined march forward. The democracy of the Soviet form of government enabled millions and millions of working men and women to develop initiative and actively to take part in every aspect of the work of the proletarian state. This broad democracy brought the power of the masses to bear on all problems with irresistible force.

To-day, we can say that Socialism has triumphed in the U.S.S.R. The foundations for the world revolution have been made secure. The relations between socialism and capitalism have changed since 1928. Socialism is stronger to-day, capitalism is weaker. This is the essence of the success of the first Five Year Plan. Its success is a portent, showing the utter bankruptcy of capitalism.

The first Five Year Plan was carried through under the constant shadow of the threat of war against the Land of the Soviets. That threat remains and is growing in menace day by day. The Soviet Union is stronger now, the forces available for its defence are tremendous. But capitalism sees the progress of Socialism with the most furious hatred. In the grip of a three year old crisis which deepens with the passing of the days, capitalism prepares for a way out by war, the only way out that capitalism can visualise.

Japanese Imperialism, shaken by the crisis, has made a bid to break out of its grip by the forcible seizure of Manchuria, threatening not only the interests of the U.S.A., but particularly showing its determination to attack the Soviet territory. Its preparations for a war go on apace, with the assistance of France and of British Imperialism.

The leaders of Socialist Parties meantime direct the workers' attention to the bandit League of Nations as the instrument of Peace. The working class remains largely unawakened to the reality of the capitalists preparations for the Blood-Bath which will put the last great war into the shade.

The Soviet Union is tremendously powerful, it will hurl back the forces of capitalism, the enemies of socialism ; but we must do our part in the capitalist countries. We are seeing Socialism realised before our eyes ; we see capitalism plunging headlong to a holocaust in which millions of workers will be sacrificed. We must prepare the masses to overthrow their capitalist governments, so that, on the basis of the workers' dictatorship, a socialist order can be built up in which unemployment and war will be impossible.

DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT AND BRITAIN

By BOB McILHONE

THE proletarian dictatorship is fifteen years old. The Government of workers and peasants led by the great party of Marxism and Leninism, the Bolshevik Party, has successfully completed fifteen years' work. According to long-established standards even of the days of rosy capitalist development in the almost deserted "workshop," the march forward in industrial progress in Russia has been amazing and near miraculous. During these fifteen years the sweeping on of Russian development has brushed aside the manifold obstacles to Socialist construction. The old Government was "no longer fit to rule." The dictatorship of the proletariat unhesitatingly took up tasks which seemed to the minds of the bourgeois scoffers "Utopian" and "fantastic." Every new obstacle met in the way has been swept to one side. Every fetter forged in the fires of the old régime, the régime of the exploitation of man by man and class by class, has been snapped and broken as one would a thread.

We have seen that the birth of a new society is not a peaceful one. Counter-revolution, sabotage, blockade, the use of the most filthy lies, pope, church, intervention, these are some of the weapons of the bourgeois world which mourns the loss of one-sixth of itself and which would turn hell loose to retrieve it. This was why a proletarian dictatorship was necessary. Did not Marx long since point out :

We have already seen that the first step in the workers' revolution is to make the proletariat the ruling class . . . corresponding with this there will be a period of political transition during which the state can be nothing other than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

(*Communist Manifesto*, new edition, p. 52.)

The birth of socialism, its development and growth could not be otherwise than one of daily stubborn struggle with the old régime, which refuses to die peacefully, which turns up in a thousand different ways and forms, to battle for existence.

Lenin declared in the brochure *Proletarian Revolution* :

It is inevitable that the exploiters should still occupy a large number of great practical advantages for a considerable period after the revolution. They still have money (since it is impossible to abolish money at once) some movable property (often of a considerable extent), social connections, habits of organisation and management, knowledge of all

the secrets (customs, methods, means and possibilities) of administration, higher education, closeness to the higher personnel of technical experts (who live and think after the bourgeois style) and incomparably higher knowledge and experience in military affairs (which is very important) and so forth and so forth. . . .

Is it any wonder then that a dictatorship of the proletariat was essential and is essential to tackle the residue of the old society, to find new methods to using the best of the old régime and the new, inexperienced but firm and determined workers initiative and skill. The resistance of the capitalist elements have been subdued and on all occasions when venturing into conflict with the workers' Government met with crushing defeat.

The Soviet Government to-day, under the leadership of the Bolshevik party, together with the masses of workers and peasants, have won through against all this, have fulfilled the Five-Year Plan and now face further marvellous historical tasks. The main one is the dream of years of working class effort, the goal of countless un-named fighters and toilers in the past, the subject of the written and spoken word for well-nigh two centuries : the building of socialism, of a system of society wherein no class exploitation exists for there will be no classes.

In the capitalist world, in this dying-out system where, in the throes of crisis, the rulers burden the toil-worn and hungry masses with new " sacrifices " and burdens, we look to the Soviet Union for inspiration and seek to emulate the wonderful example of their courage and resourcefulness. Similarly here, new gigantic changes are taking place in the whole structure of class relations. The British workers are no longer the same people who in the years of pre-war days knew little of mass ways of fighting. To-day the general crisis of capitalism has smashed many illusions. Chief among these is that it can be " left to the Trade Union officials, or the leaders of the Labour Party." Mayhap, with strong faith still in the leadership of the Labour Movement, because the revolutionary movement is still unknown to them as an alternative leadership, the workers, nevertheless, fight with increasing vigour against the capitalist burdens, against hunger and unemployment.

The significance of the Fifteenth Anniversary of the October revolution for the workers in the capitalist countries is that in this new way, under these new institutions called Soviets, under the dictatorship of the working class and peasantry there is no hunger, there is no unemployment, there are no punitive expeditions to restive peasant villages ; there is no crisis.

Long-established habits and methods of thought and action are hard to break through. Throughout the capitalist world the crisis smashes through all the hopes and plans for improvement in " trade," the hungry masses stir themselves to new heights of action, of which Ireland is the

most recent example for us. The crisis shows every sign in particular countries such as Poland, Germany and China, of developing into a revolutionary crisis and raising the question of the fight for power to an immediate issue. The economic struggles of the workers against the wages cuts of the employers, the demonstrations against hunger ("for bread") must be directed to the only alternative outcome of the crisis to that of submission, to the organisation of the proletarian revolution.

The experience of the Soviet Union therefore in this question needs thorough study by the revolutionary movement. Without study of the organisation of the proletarian revolution in 1917, without study of the main questions of the proletarian revolution to-day, which was commenced in 1917, there can be no advance for Marxism in this country.

The Reformists are compelled to listen to the rounds of cheers from the throats of the millions of workers throughout the capitalist world at each new success of socialist construction. They are compelled in the face of the rapid development of plans for intervention in Russia to pass resolutions formally opposing intervention and advocating defence of the Soviet Union. But they carry on sabotaging the slightest effort to stop a boatload of munitions, and boycott the Amsterdam Congress against War.

So they say to the workers: "Yes! there is something to be said for Soviet Russia. They have abolished unemployment and are building their industries, but their methods are not applicable to this country, where we have the opportunity if we have behind us a convinced electorate, to peacefully rid ourselves of this wicked system."

The Reformists, particularly the Lefts, continually drum it into the ear of the workers that the achievements of Russia can be emulated in this country, without the "dictatorship," without "disaster" and revolution. The workers, ready to defend the Soviet Union with every ounce of energy they possess, accept this. Those who are learning that this is reformist balderdash are still, however, very unclear, as to the precise meaning of the alternative way out of the crisis.

A worker in the *Sheffield Daily Independent* of October 14 writes in reply to a statement by Sir Percy Harris that Sovietism at work is a "gross offence against the Liberal habit of mind":

As one of the 60,000 ex-cogs in the capitalist machine in Sheffield, I would be delighted to be even a bit of dirt on one of the "cogs" in Russia or anywhere else. Three years of unemployment gives one a different outlook from the "liberal habit of mind." One realises it is a much better thing to be a "cog" in a Communist machine than on a capitalist scrap-heap. . . .

The reformists of Left and Right teach the workers to believe in Parliamentary activity in opposition to the revolutionary, working class

activity which utilises all forms for the purpose of furthering the interest of the masses. The question of the proletarian dictatorship is an urgent question of the revolution. This is the basic question. Prepared to take up "Marxian" phrases in their efforts to retrieve the masses of workers in all capitalist countries who are passing to Communism, the Left Reformists are silent on this question. To raise the issue of the proletarian dictatorship is to show the workers the only way out of the capitalist crisis. It is thus covered up and when reference is made to the Government in Russia it is referred to as a Government of the "few intellectuals" (Hamilton Fyfe). The full significance of the wide participation of the toiling masses in the Government of the country, in production and social welfare is ignored.

The Reformists are using every means to deceive once more the masses of workers with their pleas for "clear majority," "no more minority Governments," &c. The line of struggle in the capitalist countries, in Britain, is for the mobilisation of the widest united front movement against hunger, war, wage cuts. The wide masses of workers who participate in these movements must have it systematically explained to them that the way out of the crisis, of hunger and poverty requires not only a fight for certain elementary demands, but also that the struggle will inevitably raise bigger issues, that there will arise the need for new weapons, new forms of organisation. The struggle for these new forms of organisation, factory committees, strike organs, groups in unions, district committees, &c., a new revolutionary opposition movement, should not be separated from the explanation of the rôle of the Soviets and the principles of the proletarian dictatorship.

The problem of popularising the Soviets as an institution of the working class, as the form of the dictatorship of the working class and peasantry during the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, must, in the present period when the crisis rapidly develops and warns us of the approach of a revolutionary crisis in the capitalist world, be a task of immediate practical importance. When workers ask the questions: What will you revolutionaries do in Parliament?, then it is not a simple question of saying vote for this or that, or that we would combine parliamentary with extra parliamentary methods. All this must be explained. But more is needed. We must try and explain also that the working class will have to find new institutions for the building of socialism. When the question of the achievements of the Soviet Union are mentioned then here we must try and show that these achievements were only possible when the Russian working class broke through the old apparatus, the apparatus of a type the reformists wish us to use to build "socialism." Lenin argued long and strong on the character of the Soviets in his speech at the First Congress of Soviets on June 17, 1917.

The first question which we are confronted with is this: Where are we? What are these Soviets which have assembled here in an all-Russian Congress?... Let me ask you this: Is there any European country, bourgeois, democratic, or republican, where anything resembling our Soviets exist? Your answer is bound to be—no. There is no other place where such institutions do or can exist, and for this reason, there can be *either* a bourgeois government . . . or an institution of the type we are appealing to, a new type of “government” created by the revolution. . . . The Soviets are an institution that does not and cannot exist within, or alongside of the ordinary, bourgeois, parliamentary state.

The struggle for the revolutionary way out of the crisis implies also a struggle for new forms of “government.” It implies that revolutionists must consider it their duty to explain these lessons of the fifteenth anniversary of the revolution to the workers showing how impossible it is to hope for socialism until we have solved the first question—the question of “political supremacy.” Marx stated it simply: “The first step in the workers’ revolution is to make the proletariat the ruling class.” By this Marx did not mean a Parliamentary majority which is clear from any casual reading of the “Communist Manifesto.” Only when the workers had power could it advance to *any* task in the building of socialism.

That is the problem also for the present-day capitalist countries. The development of the revolutionary class forces which fight against wage cuts, unemployment, repression, for national freedom—the mobilisation of the wide united front of the workers—must be accompanied by systematic explanation in the light of Marxism and Leninism and on the basis of the experience of the Russian working class, against capitalism and when building socialism, of the basic questions of the revolution. First among these is the question of the proletarian dictatorship.

The issue in the world struggle of the capitalists and workers is concentrated in the relation between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world at large. The crisis raised the struggle to newer heights. The preparation of the working class for the historic final struggle is the imperative question of the day in many countries. The capitalists use every minute of their time intent on finding the way out in war. In war and intervention against the Soviet Union.

The significance of the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Russian revolution for the British workers, for the toilers in the colonies, for all the workers and peasants in the capitalist world is that the way out for all of them is the way out by revolutionary struggle; the way out through the Soviets; the way out by organising the initiative and creative ability of the working class and peasantry to transform the old world into a new world and destroy forever the exploitation of class by class by the expropriation of the expropriators.

THE STRIKE OF THE BELGIAN MINERS

By WILLIAM ZAK

[The following article concludes the story of the Belgian Miners' Strike which broke out in the small town of Wasmes on June 20th, and by the end of that month had spread throughout all the mining districts of Belgium. The previous section (see October issue, pp. 627-632) ended with the first effort of the Belgian reformist leaders to break the strike during the week-end of July 16-18.]

The Miners continue to Fight

But the miners do not agree with this or with the leaders of the reformist Miners' Union and the strike continues. The Government in a still further effort to break the strike start a "Communist Plot" against the security of the State. Vanderboom, secretary of the R.T.U.O., and Lahaute, secretary of the Red Miners' Union, are arrested, and warrants issued against all leading revolutionary comrades all over the country.

Arrests are operated everywhere, leaders of local strike committees are arrested; strikers, demonstrators, and strikers' wives are arrested under the most futile pretext. A special drive is made against the foreign born workers, and this especially in Limbourg where they are more numerous and took a leading part in the struggle. Coupled with this the reformists make every effort to get the miners back into the pits, and in the different districts they make a few breaches in the strike front.

A few days after the reformist betrayal and their success in breaking the strike front in different places the strike committees and the revolutionary forces with renewed energy carry out mass picketing, brigades of striking-cyclists that had been formed in the first days of the strike, are mobilised, the pits which had restarted work are abandoned. Troops have been placed in all the deserted pits and efforts are made to make the soldiers load the coal, efforts which are often unsuccessful.

Again the reformist miners' officials who had successfully got their terms accepted by a small majority on July 17, who had made every effort to get the miners back to work and break the strike, before the united stand of the workers are again compelled to change their front in order not completely to lose the influence, though rapidly declining, that they still have over the miners.

A special miners' congress is therefore called on Sunday, August 7, which decides to call a general miners' strike on the following day, but the actual position at this time can be seen from the following extract published in *Le Soir* of August 8, which states:—

It has not been possible to avoid a general strike. Already it is declared. Without doubt it (the General Strike) will not bring about a great change in the situation, for in reality since the solidarity strike of the miners there has been no work done in the coalfields.

The Congress by declaring a General Strike, does but reaffirm the existing situation. At the Congress the reformist leaders attempt to force upon the miners the proposals of the Minister of Labour : (1) Unconditional return to work. (2) The enforcement of the 5 per cent. cut.

Despite all the promises that are made by the reformists if the miners were to accept these conditions, the delegates decided to call a general strike for the next day with their original demands as objectives :—

1. Increased wages.
2. Withdrawal of all proposed wage cuts.
3. Revision of the wage agreement.

At the same time the Congress decides to call on the Commission Syndical and the Party Ouvrier Belge to call a general strike of all workers in industry. The Congress also protests against the use of soldiers for the loading and shifting of coal.

Meanwhile the Strike Committee of Seraign (near Liège)—the stronghold of the revolutionary movement in the coalfields—calls a National Conference of Strike Committees on August 13, at which practically every Strike Committee is represented. From the outset of the conference great enthusiasm is manifested by all the delegates present, and the original demands of the miners were brought to the forefront and formulated in the fighting slogans :—No more cuts ! Down with the 5 per cent. cut of June 19 ! Down with the starvation agreement.

The conference further deals with the question of strike tactics, and stresses the importance of the united front from below as the only way to ensure victory, as well as the necessity of going over to an offensive struggle against capitalism. The imperative need of extending the strike is also made clear, and the conference finished on the slogan :—Forward for the General Strike of all workers of Belgium !

This conference, called at that time, was of fundamental importance in the orientation of the strike and was undoubtedly a great factor in the consolidation of the strike front. It marked clearly that the miners had no longer any confidence in the reformist leaders and that they themselves—the miners—were determined, under their own rank and file leadership, to continue the strike.

During the weeks that followed every attempt was made by the reformist leaders to get the workers back into the pits, but apart from a few breaches here and there the strike front remained solid, despite the ever increasing repression carried out not only by the authorities, but also by the reformist leaders and their militia. Particularly vicious was the repression carried out in Limburg where the majority of the strikers are foreign born. Workers were arrested in hundreds, hundreds were deported, the scanty relief of the municipalities cut down, and as far as the foreign born were concerned relief had been refused from the beginning.

At the same the reformists and social-democratic leaders continued to negotiate behind the scenes. At a meeting of the *Commission Mixte des Mines* at the beginning of September the reformists signed an agreement which they placed before a special congress of the reformist miners union on September 7th. This congress endorsed the agreement and decided that work should be resumed on Friday, September 10th.

Speaking of this agreement at the biennial congress of the Miners' International Federation in London, Dujardin, President of the Belgian Miners'

Union and President of the Congress stated, according to the *Daily Herald* of September 14th, that :—

They (the Belgian miners) were going back to work with a slight improvement in wages, and they had ended the strike in a state of discipline and with reinforcement of their strength.

The terms which Dujardin once again claims as a victory for the workers are the following :—(1) Operation of the 5 per cent. cut of June 10th. (2) A 1 per cent. increase in wages on October 1st, if the advantages of the Belgo-German agreement permit. (3) That wages shall be stabilised until November 1st. (4) That the miners will be restarted as the situation permits. (5) A sub-commission be established to examine the revision of the agreement.

Yet, despite the fact that Dujardin declares that “ they were going back,” the Havas Agency announced on Monday, 12th, that according to the official figures of the Belgian Government, 65,000 miners were still out on strike on Monday, despite the order of the reformist bureaucracy that they should restart work on Friday the 9th. Moreover, according to the *Daily Herald*, Dujardin also declared :—

The Communists’ aim was not to get satisfaction of the real claim of the miners, but to make revolutionary propaganda.

But the miners in the past have been able to judge for themselves as was made clear by Jacquemotte, Communist deputy, in the Belgian Parliament when he stated :—

When you (the reformist) told them (the miners) “ Return to work ” and we (the revolutionary organisations) declared “ Fight for the bread of your children and wives,” who did they listen to ? You don’t answer this question, because you know they followed our lead.

In the same way, confronted with the present reformist betrayal, the miners are following the lead of the Red Miners’ Union and the R.T.U.O. At the Conference of Strike Committees called at Marchienne-Docherries on September 10th no less than 185 delegates from 50 localities repudiated this treacherous agreement and decided to continue the strike. 65,000 of the 100,000 strikers had already followed this lead on Monday, 18th.

In spite, however, of the determination shown at this Conference to continue the strike, the reformists had at last managed to break through the splendid solidarity of the miners who, for all the reformists’ manœuvres, had remained solid ever since the beginning of July. A few days later, accordingly, most of the workers had returned.

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The Lessons of the Strike

Obviously many objective lessons can be learnt from this great strike of Belgian workers. Starting as it did with a few hundred workers in the little town of Wasmès, extending until it involved over 200,000 miners, metal, quarry, tram and other workers, practically paralysing the whole of industry, it is one of the greatest events in the fight against capitalism since the struggle of the British miners in 1926, and is of fundamental importance, not only to the workers of Europe, but to the workers of the whole world.

In view of the great similarity which exists between Belgium and Britain in the industrial, trade union and political spheres it merits the close attention of every British worker and above all of the revolutionary movement of this country. Belgium and Great Britain are both primarily industrial countries depending on their exports and counting on their colonies for markets. Both have extremely powerful reformist trade union movements and strong Social-Democratic parties having at their disposal a powerful apparatus which has not only a great influence nationally, but which exerts tremendous influence both in the International Federation of Trade Unions and the Labour and Socialist International. Therefore the experiences and actions of the one are of great importance to the other and vice-versa.

In the first place the Belgian strike which broke out despite and against the will of the reformist leaders explodes the theory of the reformist leaders that it is impossible to wage widespread industrial struggles in a time of economic crisis and that the workers won't fight. It also smashes the arguments of the "left" Labour elements and "right" opportunists in the ranks of the revolutionary movement that it is impossible to lead and develop powerful strikes and struggles in opposition to the official trade union and labour movement.

The whole of the experiences previous to and during the strike bring out clearly the manœuvres and tactics adopted by the reformists to avoid, and afterwards break, the strike, as can be seen from the facts above. After opposing strike action against the cuts on the grounds of the crisis, of foreign dumping, of the stocks, &c., we see them go over to a policy of declaring themselves opposed to certain cuts in order to get others across, and they even speak of strike action. Then the strike having broken out, their efforts to break the strike having failed, they change their front in an effort to capture the leadership and in this way end the strike. They obtain certain concessions from the employers and the Government and attempt to force these terms on the workers and make every effort to get them back to work. Their manœuvres fail and they again revert to open strike breaking, collaborating with the police and the gendarmes. Under the pressure of the masses they once more declare themselves in favour of the strike, while through the Commission Syndical and the P.O.B. every effort is made to split the ranks of the workers. In the *Peuple*, articles are written trying to make a breach between the foreign born and the Belgian miners on the ground that the former work for lower wages than the latter. Efforts are made to oppose the organised to the unorganised (45 per cent. of the Belgian miners are organised and 55 per cent. unorganised). The *Peuple* writes :—

The worst enemies of the organised workers are the workers themselves. He who is not in the unions is against it. . . . The unorganised are the most bitter enemies of the working-class movement.

SS

The main effort of the reformists was directed against the revolutionary organisations, the Red Miners' Union, the R.T.U.O., and the Communist Party. Stories are spread about "gold from Moscow," "fabulous salaries" of the revolutionary functionaries, of which according to the reformists there are hundreds, about the "Communist Plot" and pacts with the employers to cause a "Socialist" defeat at the elections. Nothing was too low for the reformists in their effort to break the strike, to split the workers' ranks and oppose one section of workers to the other.

In face of the treachery of the reformists the most important feature of the strike is the tremendous reserves of strength and energy of the working-class which were able to outwit all these dastardly manœuvres and successfully maintain the united working-class front of struggle.

Of fundamental importance are the tactics of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition and the Red Miners' Union, which with a correct analysis of the situation, with correct slogans, on the basis of a broad united front of all miners and extensive preparatory work, were able rapidly to develop the strike front from eight pits to the whole of the Belgian coalfield. The setting up of rank and file strike committees elected by mass meetings of strikers proved to be of key importance in the development of the struggle, the spreading and maintaining of the strike front despite the reformist treachery and betrayals.

The correctness of the line of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement and the Red Miners' Union can be seen not only in the developing, maintaining and extending of the struggle, but also in the immediate consolidation of the revolutionary organisations, into which from the first days of the struggle the miners began to pour. In this way from the ranks of the unorganised miners it was possible to reinforce the Red Miners' Union, and from the ranks of the organised miners build up a powerful Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition both in the reformist and Christian miners' unions.

The lessons from this great strike which are of the greatest importance for the revolutionary movement of this country are: the necessity of developing in the factories and trade unions a powerful mass Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition—the nucleus of which already exists in the National Minority Movement—based on a broad united front of struggle. To attain this it is necessary untiringly to carry the fight for the day-to-day demands of the workers, taking into consideration the smallest grievances and carrying on

revolutionary mass work within the reformist trade unions and factories, two tasks which are inseparably bound up with each other.¹

¹*Breaking Through* (The Position of the Minority Movement and its immediate Tasks; Resolution of the VIIIth. Session of the Central Council of the R.I.L.U.) R.I.L.U. Publications. 1d.

The question of the united front is one of the necessary prerequisites without which in the present situation it is impossible successfully to carry on the fight against the capitalist attacks and to outwit the manoeuvres and treachery of the reformist leaders. It is therefore necessary to draw the mass of the workers into the leadership of the struggle by wide discussions on the situation and the demands, and by the election of broad rank and file strike committees including workers of all tendencies.

The question of preparations for strike action is also one which cannot be left untouched. Time and again it has been seen that spontaneous movements are easily broken, both by the employers and the reformist leaders. Therefore, unless careful preparations are made both in the factories and in the trade unions, unless the workers are clear on what they are fighting for and unless from the outset steps are taken to extend the struggle, the chances of success are compromised.

Finally, the Belgian strike shows clearly how an economic struggle in a time of capitalist crisis such as the present can rapidly develop into a powerful political struggle. In the Belgian strike we see the struggle develop between the workers on one hand, and the employers, the State apparatus and the reformist leaders on the other. Every possible means are used to break the strike, for to-day any strike which breaks out, whether against wage-cuts, speeding up, dismissals, &c., can become a struggle which endangers the whole capitalist national economy, and against which the whole forces of capitalism are mobilised to defend their system and keep power in their hands.

I.L.P. 'REVOLUTIONARY POLICY'—DISCUSSION

[Two months ago we printed an article by an "Ex-I.L.P.'er" on "The Future of the I.L.P. What is a Revolutionary Policy?," and invited discussion from Left I.L.P.'ers on this theme.

We have received several contributions other than those included in last month's issue and below, from Left I.L.P.'ers; but these show that there has evidently been a misunderstanding as to the subject of discussion. These contributions dealt with the question of the Communist Party (not Communism as a programme, but the Communist Party as an organisation), and the criticism felt by the writers in relation to the Communist Party. Such a question may also have interest and value to discuss on a suitable occasion, but it only cuts across the present issue of discussion, viz. : WHAT IS "REVOLUTIONARY POLICY" AS UNDERSTOOD BY LEFT I.L.P.'ERS?

This question needs to be discussed first in terms of principles and programme. Only on the basis of a clearing of these issues can subsequent conclusions be correctly drawn as to the specific questions of party organisation and party affiliations.

We shall therefore still be glad to keep open our pages to Left I.L.P.'ers (supporters of the "Revolutionary Policy Committees" or others) for the purpose of discussion as to what is meant by "Revolutionary Policy."—Editor, LABOUR MONTHLY.]

I.—The Revolutionary Policy Committee and its Tasks

By LEN MARKS

IN this contribution to the discussion in the LABOUR MONTHLY on the new I.L.P. policy, I wish to deal more particularly with that rank-and-file movement known as the Revolutionary Policy Committee (R.P.C.), because this represents all that is best in the I.L.P.

This group which was thrown up early this year by the revolutionary ferment and discontent of the rank-and-file promised to contain within itself active opposition to the N.A.C. leadership. It passed militant resolutions on taking part in the class struggle, in assisting the building of the N.U.W.M., and on united fronts with the Communist Party. It demanded disaffiliation from the Labour Party on the grounds of policy, not on Standing Orders, and instructed those branches which supported it to immediately put this resolution into effect. It fought against the N.A.C. at Blackpool and Bradford, and is now the only fly in the ointment of the new dressing to the old sore.

To date, this body considers it has achieved a fair measure of success. The decisions at Bradford were undoubtedly influenced by the R.P.C.,

but they signally failed to secure disaffiliation from the Labour Party on policy. Disaffiliation took place on Standing Orders, with an open suggestion from Wallhead of returning to the Labour Party "for the sake of unity." Memories of the 2½ International are still fresh in our minds, comrades !

The reason for this failure is explained by the cunning manœuvres and opportunism of the N.A.C. to check the influence of the R.P.C. by advocating disaffiliation, without conditions, immediately after the Easter Conference. Until then, for instance, Maxton had declared his "neutrality" on the question, but after Blackpool he was the leading spirit in the disaffiliationist camp.

In those days we witnessed an antagonism between the N.A.C. and the R.P.C., but now, three months after Bradford, we ask the pertinent question, what is the difference between them? The R.P.C. representing that section of the rank-and-file who, generally, "do the donkey work," are nearer the C.P. than any other section. Yet why, if they wish to be Leninists (as they declare they do), do they not show in some concrete form what they think of the Brockways, Maxtons, Murrys and all, with their talk of: "the pacifist technique of revolution"; "the revolution is not so much the method as the completeness of the change"; "the revolution must be kept in the right place, that is, in the hearts and minds," and "the moral basis for revolution"; the Parliamentary opportunism and vote-catching of the N.A.C., "must concentrate on winning every organ of local and national government." Why, in fact, do they not join the Communist Party? Or are the supporters of the R.P.C. going to be satisfied with their leaders capturing seats on Divisional Councils and operating the policy laid down at Bradford, "full of revolutionary phrases but no different from the new policy of the Labour Party" (Wise)? Because even in a "flexible" and "democratic" party, like the I.L.P., the R.P.C. cannot operate "their own special" revolutionary policy in contradistinction to that of the Party as a whole without confusing the working class more than ever, thus playing into the hands of the class enemy.

Maybe, however, the R.P.C. wants the N.A.C. for itself, and make confusion more confounded by trying to build another revolutionary party, when we know very well that the I.L.P. can never become the revolutionary party of the working class. Look at its history. Founded on opportunism and idealism, with no coherent philosophy, openly attacking "out-of-date" Marxism, a party which assisted the war-mongers in 1914-18 precisely because they were pacifists, a party which has produced such enemies to the workers as MacDonald, Snowden and Allen, which has acquiesced, however many verbal protestations it has registered, with the capitalist policy of the Labour Governments in 1924

and 1929-31, a party whose leaders are and have been past-masters at the art of opportunism and diplomatic wangling, sob-stuff and twisting : this is the conglomeration of mess and trickery which the R.P.C. considers can, one day, become the revolutionary party of the working class ; just, I suppose, as it became " Marxist " overnight !

No. the R.P.C. considers the I.L.P. has a " special function " to perform. Its objections to the C.P. are similar to those of the N.A.C., " Moscow orders," " rigidity," " does not understand British psychology." They are only putting up skittles to be knocked down again, and this I shall proceed to do. With regard to the first, " Moscow orders," it is downright shameful to see the R.P.C. lining up with the N.A.C., and the reactionary bourgeois press (*e.g.*, the *Morning Post*) in propagating this perfidious slander. The theoretical line is decided by the Executive Committee of the Communist International for each separate country. No orders here, comrades, but a sound and wise revolutionary guidance for prosecuting the class struggle. The line comes from Moscow simply because no capitalist country will permit the C.I. to have its headquarters elsewhere. Does the Second International, whose headquarters are in a capitalist country (thus proving their danger to capitalism !) give a theoretical lead ? Not at all, it is not its object to secure revolutionary purpose and unity in the international class struggle.

Regarding the second objection, they are not clear whether they mean rigidity of discipline (*e.g.*, why expel the Trotskyists ?), or rigidity of principle. There is a rigid proletarian discipline to enforce the carrying out of the correct line of the C.I.—there can be no " charitable-ness," " flexibility," or right to deviate once a decision has been taken. There is also a rigid adherence to the revolutionary principles of Marxism and Leninism, to the revolutionary struggle of the international working class. This, of course, is absolute odium to the I.L.P. who, under the guise of " flexibility " carry on their political opportunism and bartering, not having any socialist principles to hold rigidly to. As Lenin said, " the I.L.P. is independent of nothing, save Socialism."

Again, they never explain just how the C.P. fails to understand British psychology : but it is manifestly obvious that the I.L.P. do not understand British psychology or conditions when the " Living Income Policy " is jettisoned in 1931 after five years, and a " new revolutionary policy " adopted in 1932. Policy, policy, always some policy of reformism !

The R.P.C. also charges the C.P. that during twelve years of existence in a period of continuous decline of capitalism when all the objective conditions would appear to have been ripe for the growth of a revolutionary party, they have failed to win any large section of the working class. Now even if we accept that this is so (and it certainly is not), the R.P.C.

" theoreticians " make no effort to analyse or explain the reason. Were all the objective conditions ripe ? Has not the I.L.P., one of the objective conditions, comrades, consistently stood in the way of the growth of the Communist Party, by its use of left-phrases, and now revolutionary phrases, only to divert the masses into the safe paths of labourism and reformism ? This question demands an answer.

Therefore the " special function " of the I.L.P. is that of creating a new, a " British Marxist party," (here is the flavour of social-chauvinism—Leninists please note). Yet the R.P.C. *vide* C. K. Cullen, states that the theoretical level and understanding of the Communist Party is far above, nay streets ahead of the I.L.P., that its " heavy literature " is excellent material—thereby admitting the correctness of the C.P. analyses and general line. But he thinks they cannot apply their own theory, and that the I.L.P. can do so with greater success ! A party which has spent all its career in opposing Marxism, which rejected the reply of Lenin in 1921 to the twenty-one points, which suddenly turned " Marxist " overnight, claims to be able to apply the revolutionary tactic of Marxism-Leninism better than the C.P. itself ! Comrades, do not the replies of Lenin still hold good to-day ? Ask yourselves if such a loose and undisciplined organisation (and this is what they mean if they reject a rigidly disciplined party), with no revolutionary experience, and little understanding of scientific socialism, could apply Marxism-Leninism at all. No, these principles can only be applied when you have the organisation, understanding and discipline to apply them, and the I.L.P. has not got these attributes, and is never likely to have them.

Of course, the I.L.P.'ers, both the N.A.C. and the R.P.C., would like to understand Marxism-Leninism, but I ask do they strive to ? No, the party remains as it was, a party for the " middle class socialist " (as is openly admitted by some of its members), of the radical intelligentsia, but never a party of the working class, expressing a proletarian ideology. The fact is that if the R.P.C. wish to become Leninists then they can do no other but join the Party of Lenin, for they have admitted the Leninism of the Communist Party on Comrade Cullen's own statements.

Then again, if they were Marxists they would know that there cannot be two revolutionary socialist parties in this country claiming the support of the workers. If the R.P.C. wish to understand Marxian dialectics, their first lesson is to grasp the fact that of two revolutionary parties, one is for the Social Revolution, and, in the final analysis, the other is against it. And in making this formulation can we really say that the I.L.P. is the party of social revolution, or, in fact, is it the party against the revolution ? To those comrades supporting the R.P.C. this is a serious question and demands very close attention. It should be raised and discussed in every branch throughout the country.

I would venture, if one may be permitted, to advise this group not to dabble in winning seats on Divisional Councils and trying to convert the I.L.P. hotch-potch of disgruntled pseudo-revolutionaries, anarchists, sentimentalists, opportunists and pacifists, into a "brand new British Marxist party," for such a thing is impossible, but to take a step still further to the left and join their revolutionary class comrades in the only party which has consistently fought against the capitalist class in the interests of the workers and the socialist revolution, the Communist Party.

II.—A Definition of "Revolutionary Policy"

By CYRIL BUTLER

THE only possible comment from a rank-and-file I.L.P.'er whose services to the party have been as small as his indebtedness is great will seem very bleak and lacking in that fiery certainty with which your contributors are so happily endowed.

Your exclusion of comment upon the Communist Party is, I believe, an error, since the tactics and policy of that party are, for good or evil, the "norm" of "revolutionary activity" in this country. It is therefore in agreement with or criticism of that "norm" that discussion most usefully proceeds.

Since, however, you so limit us and yet require to know what we mean by "revolutionary policy" it may be best to tabulate without discussion those points upon which one finds a practically unanimous opinion in the party.¹

(1) We accept the theory of the class struggle. In consequence we are bound to judge the activities of persons and groups by the criterion of which is the class that benefits from such activities. We suspect therefore all co-operation whose object is to "keep things going till better times come."

(2) We believe that some sort of crisis in the capitalist system will arrive soon at which a conscious and prepared working-class party may be able to seize power. To this end we believe it is the task of a revolutionary party to do two things. Firstly, it must consolidate itself. By self-criticism and organised action it will make its members theoretically sound and at the same time eliminate untimely and pathological individualism. Secondly, by use of every private and public platform, it will seek

¹The writer requests us to make clear that these opinions are those of members of the I.L.P. with whom he has been in touch.

to make contact with individuals and groups outside the party so that, at any given juncture, it will know where any particular policy will obtain support and from which quarter dangerous opposition is likely to arise.

(3) We are, rightly or wrongly, suspicious of the vigorous appeals for "direct action" that sometimes emanate from—another place. We believe that the strike weapon, like every other, needs careful use to avoid blunting. This, contention though, to judge from the columns of the *Daily Worker*, is battering down an open door.

At the same time we recognise that once a struggle has started upon a class issue there can be no sitting on the fence. Our opinions and actions will be modified by the development of the actual struggle.

(4) As a party which already possesses the confidence and loyalty of many hard-working Socialists of different temperaments and experience we may find it difficult to obtain that facile unanimity which by some is considered to be the prime test of revolutionary sincerity. Nevertheless we may, at the same time, avoid the futility which condemns every error of judgment as an intentional misleading of the workers and every vagueness of policy as a deliberate diversion of revolutionary enthusiasm.

III.—The I.L.P. and Revolution

By A FORMER MAXTONITE

THE I.L.P. has disaffiliated from the Labour Party. At the moment all sincere Socialists who are non-members of the Communist Party are in a quandary. Some are still in the I.L.P. trying to reform it. Some have left the I.L.P. in disgust, not because of the Labour Party: because of the I.L.P. (I myself left it in 1926 because of the I.L.P. leaders, MacDonald, Snowden, Shinwell, T. Johnston and Wheatley. Latterly I was equally prevented from rejoining because of the leadership of Dollan, McGovern, Kirkwood, Wise. But I was equally unable to join the Communist Party of Great Britain for reasons I shall develop later, but principally through fear, ignorance, prejudice and a dislike for the controversial manners of some of the Communist Party leaders, William Gallacher, Aitken Ferguson, for example. And since I am not alone in this matter, many sincere Socialists of personal acquaintance being in exactly the same position, it is for them also I write).

When we heard the I.L.P. was about to break with the Labour Party we were heartened. In breaking with the Labour Party we knew the I.L.P. would be split; but we hoped that the best elements would come

out on the side of disaffiliation and that the discredited, hindering, reformist elements would be shed. We also hoped that when the I.L.P. would break it would be the time to re-state the policy and principles of Socialism in the light of the utter moral collapse of the Labour Party and the rapid breakdown of Capitalism.

What a magnificent opportunity the I.L.P. had to break clean and finally with the morally-rotten, politically-bankrupt Labour Party. It was the opportunity of a generation. Every sincere Socialist had prayed for it. The mass discontent of the workers demanded it. Every genuine Marxian Communist was prepared to welcome it as a sincere move to the Left and a disintegration of the Right.

The momentous moment has come and gone. The I.L.P. has bungled it. The historical moment has degenerated into a petty, miserable, domestic squabble. Dollan sinking into the gutter in his attempt to discredit Maxton. Buchanan throwing handfuls of Gorbals glabber at his erstwhile comrade-in-arms Kirkwood. The great, dispassionate, intellectual Brailsford showing his mean gratitude to the Capitalist *Manchester Guardian*. The gentlemanly Wise daring to talk about treachery. The Right Honourable Thomas Johnston, in his semi-literate, semi-decent *Forward* sowing discord, envy, hatred, malice and lies in a manner which must have been at once the joy and envy of every Capitalist editor. What a miserable end to what might have been a great historical moment! This the débâcle which Middleton Murry, in a moment either of utter blindness or gross conceit, compares to the creation of the Bolshevik faction of the Social-Democratic Party of Russia in 1903. And it is worthy of passing notice that all this miserable squabbling is engaged in by gentlemen who never cease telling us that it is only the unprincipled Communists, dead to all sense of decency, who behave in this fashion.

Still, the squabbling could have been overlooked if from it all had emerged a regenerated I.L.P.

But what actually has emerged? The same leadership unhampered by the Right. A new constitution. A new policy. But when everything is boiled down, sifted and examined (and it isn't a big job) what remains? A shorn lock of Karl Marx; a set of nice little blocks spelling Revolution—all guaranteed harmless.

Only one worker in a thousand is deeply and vitally interested in the philosophy and fundamentals of Socialism. But every worker is intensely interested in Unemployment, Means Test, Strikes, Wage Cuts, Dismissals, &c. And the worker is rapidly beginning to realise that on these momentous daily issues the I.L.P. has nothing to offer but vague generalised sentiments. The worker knows that the I.L.P. has done

little or nothing to organise them, lead them, inspire them in the daily fight with Capitalism; and since the new I.L.P. has not shown any tendency to get down to the day-to-day fights of the workers, the discontent of the workers at Maxton, Brockway and Company is growing.

But the one worker in a thousand, the worker who reads, reasons and revolts, not only does he look for the lead in the immediate struggle, he looks for fundamental principles. He wants to know on what solid rock of doctrine, of philosophy, of faith, the new I.L.P. is going to build. And the leaders of the I.L.P. can't tell him, for they don't know themselves. Maxton *is going* to prepare plans. Something to look forward to in the future. Brockway *is going* to prepare the workers' minds for the *possibility* of revolution. Buchanan, McGovern and Company are going to pose heroically as revolutionary leaders and talk loudly and blatantly a farrago of meaningless, sham revolutionary bombast to cover up their utter emptiness, their complete lack of any definite programme, of concrete proposals, of basic philosophy, in order to side-track the growing discontent and scepticism of the workers, and so keep themselves in front of the stage as working-class leaders.

These are facts which sincere Socialists, whether within or without the I.L.P., must face. The leadership of the I.L.P. may be ever so sincere, ever so courageous, with no thought in their heads other than to serve the best interests of the working class. The damning fact is that they have no policy, no basic philosophy, no deep grounding in Marxism, which they now pretend to understand and expound. The *New Leader* week after week is empty and barren, and contains little but the most trifling and superficial window-dressing. The meeting in September of the new I.L.P. in the Coliseum, Glasgow, called forth the hungry. Hungry for a lead, hungry for some concrete, tangible policy on which they could sustain themselves. Instead they were offered the wind of meaningless oratory (in Maxton's case magnificent oratory) and were sent emptily away. And let it be stated in all seriousness: if the I.L.P. in Scotland was without the undoubted attraction of Maxton's personal qualities, it would quickly pass into obscurity.

But it will be said that if the I.L.P.-er or ex-I.L.P.-er sees all this, what keeps him out of the Communist Party of Great Britain. The main reason is that no man wants the bloodshed of a revolution if any other alternative can be found, and no man of any realist perception can visualise a revolution at this stage of our civilisation being anything else but bloody. Now the C.P.G.B. has always insisted on the inevitability of the bloody revolution. Frankly, this insistence has revolted many sincere Socialists, for it has always been realised that in a revolution the most defenceless section of the community (the aged, the women, the children) suffer most. Hitherto the alternative has been Parliamentary Democracy

—faith in the enlightening effect of propaganda in converting the majority of the electorate. And it must never be forgotten that the faith in this alternative has been just as sincere and as honest as that of any so-called Communist in the inevitability of the revolution. Nevertheless, the hard logic of events has altered all that. Parliamentary Democracy may have its uses, but we all realise that in itself it can never introduce Socialism and may, in fact, even hinder its fulfilment at a most critical period. What the sincere Socialist does realise is that the working class must now be organised to overthrow the Capitalist system and through its established Dictatorship lay the foundations of the Socialist state.

In the meantime Capitalism tries to find a way out of the crisis mainly by most brutal attacks on the standards of the workers' life. This is taking place *now*. And it is the most defenceless section of the workers who are suffering most, the women, the children, the aged, the sick. They are all being driven down into degradation and starvation. And the process will be intensified as Capitalism lashes about it in frenzied efforts to extricate itself as the crisis deepens. To the convinced Marxist, who knows all about the historic mission of the working class, who is familiar with the fact that force is the midwife of progress, every event fulfils the preaching of the Marxian Word. But this the non-Marxian Socialist realises: that Socialism will never be peacefully ushered into a world of Capitalism; that Capitalism cannot expand indefinitely; that the suffering which the working class is being called upon, and will be increasingly called upon, to suffer will be greater compared to that which they would suffer in a bloody revolution. And as he realises these things, the hitherto non-Marxian Socialist becomes definitely Marxian, and having become definitely Marxian he realises that the C.P.G.B. is the only party that has had the vision to see what was coming, the knowledge to successfully analyse events, the ability to formulate a definite policy and act upon it.

The C.P.G.B. is a small party fighting every weapon in the Capitalist state, suffering just as much misrepresentation from Middleton Murry, Maxton and Brockway as from Lords Rothermere, Beaverbrook and Allen. A comparison between the literature and thought of the I.L.P. and the Communist Party also reveals this. Whereas the Communist literature is painstaking, erudite, clear, consistent, burking no issue, distorting no vital fact, the I.L.P. literature is, on the other hand, just as sincere, but vague, ill-informed, sentimental, contradictory, muddled, inconsistent, never once getting down to bed-rock, never once even attempting (because it is unable) to answer the Communist analysis. The Communist Party has made mistakes. Unlike the I.L.P. it admits them and seeks to rectify them. It is still too bitter and too sectarian, and maybe too rigid. It refuses to see good in good men like Middleton

Murry. It has not even a passing word for the past services of "the rotten opportunist Murphy." But finally these are small mistakes and irrelevant issues compared with the wider, broader, fundamental rock-bottom of its knowledge and understanding. Time will knock, nay is knocking, the sharp doctrinaire corners off the Communist Party. Can the left I.L.P.-er, the sincere unattached Socialist refuse to stand behind it in this hour of crisis when every sincere worker is needed to create a solid united front against Capitalism? The C.P.G.B. is certain of its facts, resolute to its historical mission, impregnable in its opposition to all the shilly-shally, reformist, opportunist moves of the Left, of the non-Marxian Socialists, however personally sincere and disinterested. And the plain and damning fact emerges: the leaders of the I.L.P. have taken their followers up Queer Street, have bamboozled the workers, and now seek, without a blush, to try to rectify and recover themselves by a vague talk of revolution.

The issue then is clear. There is only one way out for the working class, for the genuine Socialist. The way of the Communist Party. The way of the Communist International. The path of Revolution, of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

BRITISH SCIENTISTS AND THE WORLD CRISIS

By B.Sc.

[We print the following article from a group of scientists, for the purposes of discussion. Although not fully reaching to the standpoint of dialectical materialism in relation to the very important problems raised of the real character of science, it is a valuable criticism of the present tendencies of bourgeois science in relation to the world crisis.]

SCIENTISTS and technologists in capitalist countries are being driven to consider the relation of science to the world economic crisis, as is shown by the great increase of space given to the subject in scientific and technological journals. For example, the weekly journal *Nature* (the general paper of science for the English-reading world) has devoted successive editorials to discussing what contribution "science" can make towards the "solution" of the problem of the crisis. This movement of awakening and increasing concern has been strikingly brought to a head by Sir Alfred Ewing in his presidential address at the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at York (August, 1932).

The interest of these articles in *Nature* and of Sir Alfred Ewing's address is two-fold. They bring out sharply the prevalent ideology of the scientific caste as it exists to-day, and at the same time they reveal the inherent inability of *bourgeois-controlled* science to make any "practical" contribution towards "solving" the problem of the crisis.

Science and the Average Man

The essence of the ideology of natural scientists in capitalist countries is well shown in such common phrases as "seclusion of the laboratory," "science for science's sake," "pursuit of knowledge and Truth for their own sakes." Repeatedly the attitude of mind is found which divorces "science" from life in general, as if "science" existed in a water-tight compartment and doses of it could be "used" and "applied" in other fields; as if "scientific thinking" and "scientific method" were used by natural scientists alone; as if it were some special property or attribute of their particular type of minds, "the little something that others haven't got."

A few quotations from Sir Alfred Ewing's address expose this attitude of mind, the confusionist method of his thought and his reactionary standpoint. With an imperial flourish he begins:

Last year our centenary was celebrated in London, the metropolis of the Empire, under the presidency of General Smuts, who fittingly embodied the *Imperial aspect* that is part of the glory of the British Association. (Italics ours.—B.Sc.) (*Nature*, September 3, 1932.)

So much for the internationalism of science !

The scientific caste ideology is shown in such condescension to the “average man” as :

What I wish . . . to point out is that the new spirit strengthens a sense of brotherhood between the *scientific adept and the average man who in his own way* is also commonly a seeker after truth . . . Further, at a time like the present when we carry a load of social and political and economic discontents, the *ordinary citizen* doubtless reflects that *if only* we could apply the dispassionate temper of science to the difficulties of the hour we might face them with less waste of effort and a greater likelihood of settlement. (Italics ours.—B.Sc.)

What is this difference between the search for truth by the “scientific adept” and the search by the “average man” doing it “in his own way” ? What is this “dispassionate temper of science,” this “scientific method” that apparently only the scientist uses ?

Is Science only for the Laboratory ?

What after all is the usual method which a scientist employs in his work ? Surely he starts out by making a careful and accurate observation of the facts. He consciously tries to approach his problem objectively, leaves no assumptions uncriticised and is always ready to modify his theories by the facts and so prevent any distortion of the facts to fit his own preconceptions.

Having made this careful and accurate observation of the facts, scientists endeavour to classify and organise them, trying to find the connections between them, and the laws that govern them. But always these laws are being subjected by them to the test of experiment and practice.

But outside the laboratory it is found that all this careful and accurate observation of the facts is left behind. The prevailing tendency is to ignore facts and rather to preserve traditional beliefs and attitudes of thought. The scientists of the present day world, the bourgeois world, when faced with wider questions, forget the scientific method of their laboratory. The caste ideology, the narrow professional outlook which has been developed among scientists under capitalism fosters this with the result that a scientist examining closely, as it were, the small area of the bark of one tree, becomes habitually unable to see the wood for the trees.

The much lauded “dispassionate temper of scientists” disappears entirely when they approach the broader problems of life.

Science in History

Science was one of the weapons of the revolutionary bourgeoisie (merchants) in their fight to overthrow feudalism in the middle ages, when the static dogmatic universe of theology was exposed as false and the mechanical Newtonian one discovered in its place. The merchants could navigate the oceans and, impelled forward by the great economic changes which demanded ever-increasing technological and theoretical knowledge, science appeared to have come into its own.

With the industrial revolution in England capitalism became fully fledged. Scientists and technologists very definitely had problems set them for solution, problems arising out of social requirements as a whole and out of industrial requirements in particular. These problems were set by their employers in industry, by the State and by the social environment in general. The scientist was thus used, directly or indirectly as an instrument by the ruling social classes, he was in fact exploited, he was not a free agent. This limitation on his activity was hidden, he was unconscious of it. For the ruling social class knew that this particular servant worked best when given scope; the velvet glove was used. He was allowed sufficient privilege to give him and his children the illusion of belonging to the class which had really enslaved him. His way of thinking, outside his "professional field" was that of his masters. He was encouraged to concentrate on specific problems; the wider implications of the new knowledge he discovered was said to be outside his province—a job for another specialist—an economist, sociologist, and so on—(the old principle: divide and rule).

In this way the essentially revolutionary nature of science was kept out of the limelight, and science was used to solve the problems which capitalism required solved for it to go on developing.

Darwin and Marx

But two events occurred in the latter half of last century which again brought the revolutionary nature of science to the fore and provoked the unmistakable hostility of the exploiting class. Darwin propounded the first rational and scientific explanation of how man emerged from the interplay of natural forces. Marx turned his attention to history and propounded the first rational and scientific explanation of the behaviour of mankind in terms of the never ceasing interplay between man and his environment; that, since it is the primary function of man to reproduce himself both as an individual and as a race, the key to history must be in his economic necessities.

The new reactionary ruling class stormed against Darwin, for they sensed the danger to the "religion" which they had turned into one of the strongest pillars of their State—although but a short time previously

they, in their fight for dominance, had not hesitated to attack the "religion" of the class they were seeking to overthrow (18th century atheism against the dogmatic church).

Marx released a train of thought, itself the product of what he taught, which made clear how blind the forces have been which have so far shaped the history of mankind. As Engels, the collaborator and interpreter of Marx has said (in *Anti-Dühring*) when talking of capitalist industrial development and the working-class struggles to which it gives rise.

" . . . The new facts (i.e., the working-class revolts, B.Sc.), made imperative a new examination of all past history, and then it was seen that *all* past history was the history of class struggle, that the warring classes of society are always the product of the modes of production and exchange, in a word, of the economic conditions of their times.

It is obvious why such a revolutionary analysis of history has been anathematised by the ruling social class, why the whole apparatus of suppression and slanderous attack and perversion has been used against it. The departmentalisation of science has greatly helped in this, since an analysis of the whole field of society has been too wide for study by narrow specialists.

Science Faces Up to the Crisis

Thus the scientist in capitalist countries is now found saddled with an ideology that separates "science" from life in general and not using the great generalising principle of Marxism, either through lack of knowledge of it or through deliberate refusal to use it. All the contradictions of the world "outside" the laboratory which make the honest scientist throw up his hands in despair can only yield to the analytical weapon of Marx, the scientific analysis of social development.

Yet the situation to-day is presented by *Nature* in article after article in which floundering attempts are made to show how science should attack the world economic problem. All the editorial suggestions of *Nature* have been concerned with mitigating the severity of the crisis and with palliative treatment. No analysis of the situation is attempted to approach the fundamental problem, namely, the *cause* of the crisis. It is as if the injection of morphine, which might dull the pain, were suggested as a new and "scientific" cure for cancer. The editor of *Nature*, the president of the British Association, &c., are *apparently* unaware that the problem was analysed completely, the disease diagnosed and the cure pointed out long ago by Marx and Engels in their scientific study of the evolution of society.

Instead, such statements are found as :

The confusion which exists in economics to-day is not due to the absence of statistical facts but to our lack of scientific knowledge of imponderable psychological factors having their basis in human energies, in the personal and group loyalties of men, their fears, ideals, passions and ambitions. (*Nature*, July 23, 1932, p. 109.)

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What a fantastic thing for a man, faced with a problem and calling himself a scientist, to write! It is implied that, if we had scientific knowledge of the "imponderable psychological factors," &c., we could resolve this confusion of economics. There is no attempt to consider and to analyse these "imponderable" factors objectively, no attempt to get behind them to their cause, they are just accepted as "imponderable." Where is the "dispassionate temper of science" applied here? Again in the leading article "Scientific Leadership in Industry" the following is found:

In the absence of adequate leadership, science, whether in its broadest aspect, or in its narrowest technical sense, will never occupy its rightful place in industry." (*Nature*, July 16, 1932.)

What is meant by "the rightful place of science in industry"? If the writer had paused for a little analytical thought he might have asked himself that question. If he meant that industry generally should be developed to the highest possible stage of technique, further thought would have shown him, that one aspect of the world crisis—"over-production"—is largely due to this very factor of increased technical development and efficiency, and rationalisation, and that this is the crucial problem. More honest thought might then have led him to see that this is the *insoluble* problem for *capitalism*.

Many similar quotations could be given, all along the same lines, tacitly accepting the present social organisation, attempting cures within the arbitrary bounds of that organisation, never once really analysing the problem and realising that the crisis is inevitable under capitalism, and that the only cure for the disease is to remove the cause. In not one single case does this, the leading journal of the English-reading scientific world, attempt to do what every scientist must do in attacking a problem, namely, make an objective analysis to define exactly what problem it is that he has to solve. Sir Alfred Ewing's address ended on a note which could only produce pessimism and despair amongst his hearers.

More and more does mechanical production take the place of human effort, not only in manufactures, but also in all our tasks, even the primitive task of tilling the ground. So man finds this, that while he is enriched with a multitude of possessions and possibilities beyond his dreams, he is in a great measure deprived of one inestimable blessing—"the necessity of toil."

And this in the industrial heart of England! Is Sir Alfred Ewing unaware of the millions of unemployed "ordinary citizens" who have neither a multitude of possessions nor the "inestimable blessing of toil"; and the millions more who toil under the worst possible conditions for the barest necessities of life until further attacks on their living conditions drive them to strike action, as in Lancashire now? No, he is not unaware of this:

In many cases unemployment is thrust upon him, an unemployment that is more saddening than any drudgery. And the world finds itself glutted with competitive commodities produced in quantities too great to be absorbed.

Sir Alfred Ewing does not enquire *why* the world is unable to absorb the commodities with which it is glutted. Indeed he, as a scientist, makes matters worse confounded with the following invitation to throw in their cards: "Where shall we look for a remedy? I cannot tell." Actually this merely tends to conceal his real remedy, the remedy of all other capitalists to-day—destruction as we will shortly show beyond all doubt. Compare this with Marx:

"... Within the capitalist system all methods for raising the social productiveness of labour are brought about at the cost of the individual labourer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into a means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange him from the intellectual potentialities of the labour-process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labour-process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working-time, and drag his wife and child beneath the wheels of the juggernaut of capital."

(*Capital* I., p. 660. London, W. Glazier Ltd., 1920.)

Who is the scientist—Ewing or Marx? Whose approach is objective?

Enough of this "leading" scientist's address has been quoted to show how urgent it is that all who work with hand and brain, in factory, workshop and laboratory, should be able to explain and so to see clearly the rôle of such "scientists" under capitalism—namely, to throw the "average citizen" into despair, thinking that if "Science" cannot find a way out—then, indeed, there is *no* solution!

Cry Halt, and Decay or Advance through Revolution

But the "average" honest individual scientist has another problem to face—namely, the systematic and deliberate impeding of the development of technology and retarding of technical progress by capitalism, reaching its most intense form under monopolist capitalism.

Instances of deliberate suppression of inventions and technical processes must be known to all scientific workers. Even those scientific achievements which are put into effect, only aggravate the position of the workers, increasing unemployment. As Marx wrote: "Under capitalism it is not a blessing to be a productive worker but a curse" and therefore "the worker considers the development of the productive forces of his labour as something hostile to him, and he is right in doing

so"—instance the "more looms to a weaver" situation in Lancashire, and the deliberate scrapping of machinery in favour of more crude manual methods, *e.g.*, the pick-and-shovel plan of many American municipalities to "relieve unemployment" by prohibiting labour-saving machinery for public works, not to mention the plans now being carried out of buying up shipbuilding yards in order to destroy them for ever, or the plans proposed to shut down collieries, break-up shipping and sell off "redundant" cotton machinery.

In addition to such deliberate suppression there is the failure to use technical and scientific progress under another form. An example of this is given in the letter of Sir Walter Fletcher, Secretary of the Medical Research Council—to the *Practitioner* (September, 1932)—raising the important point regarding the possible part played by rickets in the production of a high maternal mortality rate in England—higher than in the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden. It is pointed out that *rickets is now claimed to be a preventable disease* and that recent research has brought the means of making adequate supplies of Vitamin D "readily available" for all nursing mothers and growing children throughout the population and hence rickets should no longer be a menace. He goes on to say "administrative action is lagging too far behind the advances in knowledge that have brought these increased powers" and more urgent application of the latest work is necessary.

But it is this same "administrative action," operated by the National Government which is decreeing more savage cuts in school feeding costs (where children get milk which contains Vitamin D), in maternity benefits, and in the social services in general. The scientist then finds himself thwarted in all directions by the capitalist system of which he is the servant. Technical progress is barred, inventions are suppressed, knowledge cannot be used—in all directions the creative ability of the scientist is stunted and suppressed. Often science is employed for deliberately perverted ends—manufacture of poison gases, high explosives and all the weapons of "scientific" warfare, and systematically to destroy and reduce the food resources of humanity in order to keep up the price (*e.g.*, the eosinification and gasification of rye and wheat in Germany).

Indeed the presidential address of Sir Alfred Ewing does but reflect this increasing tendency to hamper and shelve all discovery of means to increase the productive forces of society, and even to destroy those forces that already exist. This year's chosen leader of all British scientists enunciates the following sham words of warning to his fellows—words of warning which are clothed in philosophical terms, yet whose meaning is clear enough: *Jam the brake on hard!*

The cornucopia of the engineer has been shaken over all the earth, scattering everywhere an endowment of previously unpossessed and unimagined capacities and powers. . . . Man was ethically unprepared for so great a bounty. In the slow evolution of morals he is still unfit for the tremendous responsibility it entails. The command of Nature has been put into his hands before he knows how to command himself.

This above all else shows the complete bankruptcy of the leaders of present-day science, the Ewings and their like, the leading scientists of bourgeois society. These words are proof of the fact that the stage of development in the present system of society has been reached which was foretold by Marx right back in 1859 in the following words:

At a certain stage of development the material forces of production in society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work before. From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then comes the period of social revolution. (A contribution to the Critique of Political Economy preface, p. 12, Kerr Edition, 1904.)

Science can only become free by breaking the limitations that capitalism imposes on it; Scientists must realise that a path free from these limitations can only be achieved by adopting a scientific outlook towards *all* aspects of life and by realising that none of them can be separated off as natural science is by capitalism from the others. Ewing, reflecting the tendency of capitalist society in decay, cries halt to further scientific development.

But a scientist must ask what is the reason for this cry, how in fact can science become freed from the fetters that now bind it, *how* is the *cause* of the crisis to be removed? There is only one way—by the complete overthrow of capitalism and the building of Socialism. History has given this task to the vast mass of the exploited—the workers of the world. The individual scientist must learn that the limitation of science is inherent in capitalism, and that the further evolution of science demands social revolution. Only by working on the side of the revolutionary proletariat can the individual scientist give expression to the revolutionary nature of science.

MARX AND ENGELS ON IRELAND—II.

[We continue this month the second instalment of the Correspondence of Marx and Engels illustrating their attitude on Ireland. The extracts have been made by T. A. Jackson, who has also provided an Introduction and explanatory Notes. The letters printed in this instalment have been specially translated from the German edition of the Correspondence between Marx and Engels now being published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute.]

THIS second instalment is connected with the culmination of the Fenian conspiracy in 1867; and the attitude of the International Working Men's Association thereto.

The Fenian Movement centred upon the activity of a secret, armed, revolutionary Nationalist society called variously the "Fenian," or the Irish Republican, Brotherhood. At its height it had a definite central organisation both in Ireland and the U.S.A., as well as branches in Britain and the Colonies.

The actual beginnings of Fenianism—(the name, by the way, is an allusion to the traditional Fianna, the fighting confederation led by the legendary Len Finn) seem to have been, in part, a reorganisation (in 1852) of some of the elements enrolled during the '48 under the disguise of a literary and debating society. A fresh start was made in 1860 with the launching of an open agitation as at one and the same time an advertisement of, and a camouflage for, the secret organisation.

In 1863 a newspaper, the *Irish People*, was established in Dublin, and the preparations for insurrection were superintended by James Stephens (the "Head Centre") from its office. By 1865 it was plain that the possibility of a rising was near. Common rumour numbered the Fenians by the hundred thousand, while the conviction of Fenian agents detected administering the oath of allegiance to the Irish Republic to soldiers in the British Army gave evidence that the authorities had reason for the alarm they began to show. A raid on the office of the *Irish People* made prisoners of the chief Fenian leaders (other than Stephens), among them Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. Stephens himself was located and arrested a month later, but escaped within a fortnight through the connivance of Fenians on the prison staff.

The trials (which had revealed the existence of police spies among the leaders) ended in sentences of prolonged periods of penal servitude—O'Donovan Rossa, the most defiant of all, to the longest, "for life."

After delaying all through 1866 Stephens was compelled by the active spirits in the U.S.A. to give a "positive assurance" that fighting would

begin with 1867. Arrangements were made for the night of February 12, 1867, to be the day and the word was given to this effect. Part of the plan was staged for the day before, in England.

Again spies were at work and the authorities put on their guard. In several places actual attacks were made upon police barracks—the police being on the alert, the insurgents achieved no success.

A similar fate overtook the rising on the date, March 5, to which the Dublin chiefs had deferred the action. It was clear that the authorities were on the alert, and hence, although many thousands mustered at the various rendezvous next to nothing could be even attempted.

This second fiasco completely discredited Stephens (who had remained all the time in Brooklyn, U.S.A., directing operations from afar). He was deposed and replaced by Colonel T. J. Kelley, an Irish-American, who had superintended the escape of Stephens in 1865. A fresh rising was planned for September, 1867, and in connection therewith Kelley visited England. He and his lieutenant, Deasy, were arrested "on suspicion" by the Manchester police, and on September 18, 1867, were committed for trial. The local Fenians had, however, been mobilised, and the "Black Maria" which was bearing them to the Salford Jail was held up under the railway bridge which crosses the Hyde Road by an armed band. Kelley and Deasy were liberated and made their escape, one of the police guard being killed. Unfortunately the covering party were not so successful, and three of them were captured. The three prisoners (along with a number of others, collected in an indiscriminate raid on the Irish quarter of Manchester) were indicted for murder.

Five prisoners were tried together: Allen, Larkin, O'Brien, Condon and Maguire (the latter a private in the Royal Marines). All were found guilty, and all sentenced to death.

Owing to the worthlessness of the evidence, after an agitation two of them, Condon and Maguire, were subsequently released, but the other three were hanged as "murderers" on November 23, 1867.

This treatment of political offenders as common murderers excited furious indignation among Irish Nationalists, and no less disgust among militant British workers—repercussions of which can be traced in the letters following. The Fenian conspiracy broke down as an organised movement—lacking any co-ordinating centre that could survive in the general atmosphere of suspicion. It split first into fragments: then into isolated groups—finally (to a large extent) into individual elements. It was established, however, permanently, as a sentiment which later found a succession of organised expressions. Reorganised in 1893, and reconstructed in 1910, it (under its official name of Irish Republican Brotherhood) provided the main body of the rising of Easter week, 1916.

It was one of the "break-away" groups, quite out of touch with the main body which organised the crude and abortive attempt to effect another rescue from Clerkenwell prison in December, 1867, which Marx condemns in his letter of December 14, 1867.

With regard to the attitude of the International Working Men's Association on the Fenian movement, as in subsequent instalments of these letters further important references to the discussions will be found, any comment that may be necessary will be deferred till then.

However, it is very important, and indeed significant, in relation to the present stage of the Irish struggle against British Imperialism, to note the three things that Marx considered in 1867 would express the desire of the Irish: (1) Self-Government and Independence from England; (2) Agrarian Revolution; and (3) Protective Tariffs against England.

That English workers must include in their platform a demand for the repeal of the Union and that only "experience must show later whether the merely personal union between these two countries can continue to exist."

* * * *

MARX TO ENGELS.

November 30, 1867.

DEAR FRED,

If you have read the newspapers, you will have seen that (1) the Memorial of the Council of the International on the Fenians has been sent to Hardy¹ and that (2) the debate on Fenianism was public and that it was reported in the *Times*. There were also present reporters from the Dublin papers, the *Irishman* and the *Nation*.

I arrived very late (I have had a fever for about a fortnight which has only left me two days ago) and indeed would not have intervened; firstly, because of feeling run down after the fever, and, secondly, because of the ticklishness of the situation. Nevertheless, the chairman, Weston, wanted to force me and so I moved the adjournment and pledged myself to speak last Tuesday. I had in fact prepared for last Tuesday not a speech but the *points* of a speech. However the Irish reporters did not turn up; we waited for them till nine o'clock and we only had the hall till ten-thirty.

On my instigation Fox² had prepared a long speech. When the session was opened, I declared that on account of the lateness of the hour I would waive my right to speak in favour of Fox. As a matter of fact, because of the recent executions at Manchester,³ our subject, Fenianism, had become linked up with the passions and emotions of the moment, and this would have forced me (but not the abstract Fox) into revolutionary

fulminations instead of my intended objective analysis of the situation and movement. So by remaining away, and thus causing a belated opening of the session, the Irish reporters have done me a great service. I don't like getting myself mixed up with people like Roberts, Stephens and Co.⁴

Fox's speech was good, first because it was made by an *Englishman*, and, secondly, for its purely political and international aspects. But he only touched on superficialities. The resolution which he brought forward was bad and lacked content. I opposed it and got it referred back to the standing committee.

What the English do not understand is that since 1846 the economic grip, and consequently also the political aim of the English rule in Ireland has entered upon an entirely new phase, and that, for this reason, Fenianism is characterised by a socialist tendency (in a negative sense as directed against the appropriation of the land) and has become a "Lower orders' movement." What can be more absurd than to lump together the barbarities of Elizabeth and Cromwell who wanted to supplant the Irish by English colonists (in the Roman sense) and the present system which wants to supplant them by sheep, cows and pigs! The system in force from 1801 to 1846 (evictions during this period being only exceptional, principally in Leinster where the land is particularly good for rearing cattle) with its rackrents and middlemen, fell to pieces in 1846. The repeal of the Corn Laws which was partly the result of, and in any case, was accelerated by the Irish Famine, took from Ireland the monopoly of providing England with corn in average seasons. Wool and meat was the watchword, and so the conversion of tillage into pasture. Out of this there developed the systematic consolidation of farms. The Encumbered Estates Act,⁵ which turned a mass of former middlemen who had feathered their nests into landlords, accelerated the process. The clearing of the estates in Ireland (!) is now the only thought of English rule in Ireland. The stupid English Government in London naturally understands nothing itself of this immense change since 1846. But the Irish know it. From Meagher's proclamation (1848) up to the Election Address of Hennessy⁶ (1866), the Tory and Urquhartite, the Irish have expressed their consciousness of this fact in the clearest and most forcible manner.

Now comes the question, what are we to advise the *English* workers to do? In my opinion they must include as a clause in their platform the *Repeal of the Union* (in short the joke of 1783⁷ only democratised and brought up to date). It is the only *legal* and so only possible form of Irish emancipation which can be accepted as part of the programme of an *English* party. Experience must show later whether the merely personal union between these two countries can continue to exist. I half believe it can if it were to take place at once.

What the Irish want is: (1) Self-government and Independence from England; (2) Agrarian Revolution. With the best will in the world, the English cannot do that for them but they can give them the legal means to do it for themselves; (3) Protective tariffs against England.

From 1783 to 1801 all branches of Irish industry were in a flourishing condition. The union, by breaking down the protective tariff wall which the Irish parliament had erected, destroyed all industrial life in Ireland. The very small linen industry in nowise compensates for this. The Union of 1801 had the same effect on the whole of Irish industry as the measures for the suppression of the Irish woollen industry, &c., passed by the English parliaments under Anne, George, &c.⁸

As soon as the Irish are independent, necessity will force them to become Protectionists like Canada, Australia, &c. Before I bring my point of view before the Central Council (next Tuesday—this time, I hope, without the presence of reporters), I'd be very glad if you could let me know yours in a line or two.

Yours, K.M.

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MARX TO ENGELS.

December 14, 1867.

DEAR FRED,

This last escapade of the Fenians in Clerkenwell⁹ is very stupid. The mass of the Londoners, who had shown much sympathy for Ireland, were made angry by it; and were thus thrown into the arms of the Government Party. It is not to be expected that the London proletarians will allow themselves to be blown up for the greater glory of the emissaries of the Fenians. Such secret, melodramatic and conspiratorial methods generally end in failure

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LONDON.

December 17, 1867.

DEAR FRED,

The London correspondent of the *Irishman* will, if you will write it in English, get published in that Dublin paper as coming from him in correspondence form a column of criticism of the book¹⁰ (in which, however, Ireland must play the real rôle). I send you a couple of copies of the paper and you will see what has to be done

NOTES.

¹⁰ "HARDY"—Gathorne Hardy, then Home Secretary, afterwards Lord Cranbrook.

²⁰ "FOX"—Peter Fox, Secretary to the General Council, I.W.M.A.

³⁰ "EXECUTIONS"—of Allen, Larkin, and O'Brien (see introduction).

“ROBERTS, STEPHENS, & CO.”—Rival leaders of the factions into which the I.R.B. had split. JAMES STEPHENS, the original Head Centre; W. R. ROBERTS, the leader of the anti-Stephens section in America. It is noteworthy that Marx’s opinion of the contending leaders was shared by John Mitchell, the ’48 leader, who was at this stage invited by both factions to place himself at the head of the movement. He refused to meddle in its quarrel.

“ENCUMBERED ESTATES ACT”—An Act which enabled the inheritor of an entailed estate “encumbered” with debt to compound with his creditors by surrendering part of the estate at a valuation.

“MEAGHER-HENNESSY”—THOMAS FRANCIS MEAGHER, one of the ’48 leaders, known as “Meagher of the Sword” in consequence of a burst of rhetoric in favour of the “sword” as against the “moral force” of the O’Connellites which precipitated the split between O’Connell and the Young Ireland Party. JOHN POPE HENNESSY (afterwards knighted), a Cork man, made a brilliant debut in the House of Commons, being elected for N. Tipperary with Fenian support in opposition to a Governmental candidate backed by the local landlords. He was said at the time to “have nobody but Disraeli himself between him and the leadership of the Tory Party.” He accepted a colonial governorship and retired from Parliament for a number of years, but returned later to sit for his old constituency as a Nationalist. In the split of 1890 he sided against Parnell.

“THE JOKE OF 1783”—In 1783 the British Parliament (under pressure of (a) the revolt of the American Colonies; (b) the war with France; (c) the Volunteer Movement in Ireland, led in the Irish Parliament by Henry Grattan; and (d) “unrest” among the British “lower orders” such as found expression in the Gordon Riots, 1780) passed, at the demand of the Irish Parliament a “Renunciation Act” which stated specifically: “the right claimed by the people of Ireland to be bound only by laws enacted by His Majesty and the Parliament of that Kingdom shall be established. . . for ever, and shall at no time hereafter be questioned or questionable.”

“THE UNION [of the Parliaments of Ireland and Britain] had an effect on the whole of Irish Industry, &c.”—that is to say, whereas the Parliament of Ireland, virtually independent since 1782, had systematically protected Irish agriculture and industry as against that of Britain, the Union under a pretence of incorporating Ireland in Britain, reversed the process and gave the British manufacturers a steadily increasing advantage over those of Ireland.

“CLERKENWELL”—To effect the rescue of a Fenian chief imprisoned in the Clerkenwell prison a scheme was designed to blow a hole in the wall of the exercise-ground through which the prisoner could escape—he having been warned by a white ball thrown over the wall from outside, during the exercise-hour. The plan was carried out, a barrel of gunpowder was wheeled up to the wall on a barrow, a fuse passing through the bung-hole was lighted, the ball was thrown, and the conspirators scuttled out of range of the explosion. This, which came in due course, had effects quite other than those designed. True, several tons of masonry, in the shape of a huge V were driven out of the prison-wall (which was some four feet thick at the base), but the main force of the explosion, alike direct, and by rebound from the wall, was felt by the crowded tenement houses which formed the other side of the street. Nearly the whole street was wrecked; the houses nearest to the explosion-centre completely collapsed, the upper-stories of the houses on either side were destroyed, two people were killed outright, several others died later from injury and shock; altogether some 120 casualties resulted—mostly to women and children—including more than one fatal premature confinement.

The affair was condemned even more by the main body of Fenian opinion than it was by Marx above.

¹⁰THE BOOK—i.e., Volume I. of Marx’s *Capital*, published a few days before. Engels secured the insertion of a review (anonymous) in the *Irishman*.

BOOK REVIEWS

CAPITALIST HOUSING AND HOW TO FIGHT IT.

London's Homes for Heroes. Published by the All London Tenants' Defence League, 59 Cromer Street, London, W.C.1. 1d.

THE bankruptcy of capitalism is most often illustrated by the destruction of immense "surplus" stocks of food at a time when millions are literally starving. Not perhaps outwardly so striking, but inwardly of even greater significance, is the failure of capitalism to provide even a minimum standard of housing for its wage slaves. Conditions that exist to-day in working-class districts all over the country are typified by a statement in the Bethnal Green Medical Report: "Low as are the official standards of overcrowding, it is well known that hundreds of families are living considerably below them."

The significance of these conditions is that it is not only "private" capitalism which has failed, but still more the Labour Party's dearly beloved "public" variety. It has been proved impossible for public authorities *both* to provide tolerable housing conditions for workers at rents they can afford to pay, *and* to pay interest to the bondholders. And the last-named consideration naturally comes first so long as the worker's protest is still weak and unorganised.

The pamphlet *London's Homes for Heroes*, gives some striking examples of the L.C.C.'s way out of this dilemma. Their flats at rents from 16s. to 25s. *plus* travelling expenses are naturally out of the question for most working class families to-day. For those who cannot pay the prohibitive rents they have hit on various "economy schemes." In one, the total floor space is to be reduced a hundred square feet below standard. In another, the flats will be still smaller, without kitchen or scullery, and with one bathroom between three flats. The rotten quality of the materials used in these "economy" constructions is also illustrated in the pamphlet.

Truly capitalism's way to abolish the slums is to rebuild them with a vengeance!

But the main value of the pamphlet is not its exposure of the rotten conditions of the workers under capitalism. Its chief value lies in its account of successful working class *resistance* to these conditions. The Tenants' Defence Leagues which are springing up all over the country are an important part of the mass movement against capitalism. They have already many achievements to their credit in the way of preventing evictions and compelling landlords to make repairs. But this work is not of a narrow "legalist" nature. Its basis is essentially the mass movement, and for this reason the work of the Defence Leagues broadens out considerably so as to include other issues besides those of rent and repairs. In Bethnal Green the L.C.C. has commenced work on a children's playground as a result of agitation by the Tenants' Defence League. There is every reason why the Defence Leagues should take up questions like the feeding and clothing of school children. They will thus become one of the most important means of mobilising the workers against the Government of Hunger and War.

D. G.

MISLEADING HUMBUG.

If we want Peace. By H. N. Brailsford. (Hogarth Press.) 66 pp. Cloth 2s 6d. ; Paper 1s. 6d.

BRAILSFORD, who is one of the chief conjurors of the Geneva illusions, is greatly concerned at the recent exposures of the League, and his book is an endeavour to retrieve its position.

Just a typical example :—" The failures of the League to prevent these aggressions . . . is only too painfully evident. To register the fact is not to call in question the conception of the League itself or even its actual constitution."

The " failures " are due to lack of a realisation of its possibilities by its members, thus retaining the idea that the League is something above the nations.

By a readjustment of this constitution, by tightening it, by a change of outlook it is to be evolved to perfection.

He states the causes of war :—" . . . the unsatisfied claims of nationality, the unsatisfied demands of growing industrial powers for raw materials, markets and field for capital investment."

His every endeavour is directed to avoiding any analysis of the class position and to any realisation that these " causes " are themselves caused by imperialist contradictions which cannot be solved save as a class issue.

He tries to show that these difficulties can be evolved away without upsetting the present system.

The reference to the I.L.O. throws a flood of light upon the mind of the author. " In proportion as the International Labour Office raises the conditions of the workers in backward countries to the level of his more fortunate fellows elsewhere"

Just think of it ; " raising the conditions of the workers," when every member of the League is economising and attacking the workers as hard as they can. To what level are they to be raised ? To that of England or Germany where conditions are being viciously driven lower ? What misleading humbug !

The best part, however, is that on Imperialism, which Brailsford suggests can be developed into " Trusteeship " through the medium of the League.

The question of the Mandates gives him his cue. " In the Mandate the League has invented its technique for the realisation of the idea of trusteeship."

A few lines later Brailsford gives an example of how this evolution operates.

Who would have predicted the voluntary surrender by one of the conquerors of his Mandate ? But the British Government has negotiated a treaty with Irak which provides for its termination and promises in its place all the privileges of League membership.

Britain conquered the country with fire and sword (as Brailsford admits), then sets up a puppet government : continues to murder native tribes, holds the country down by force, extracts tribute, and this is called " Trusteeship." The oil, of course, belongs to the company.

Japan is doing somewhat the same in Manchuria, and doubtless this too will soon be an example of " Trusteeship." Need I say that Brailsford's recipe for India is of the same type.

But, Brailsford goes much further. He builds the idea that imperialist contradictions can be removed by internationalising them. He talks of a "Trusteeship which must draw no exclusive advantage from the management of his ward's estate," meaning that they should share with their fellow robbers these sources of raw material and cheap labour power. This is undoubtedly a hungering after the old, hopeless dream of an international imperialist oligarchy.

The book is largely an attempt to hide his admission in the *New Leader*, February 26: "The League . . . means nothing but the Governments which compose its Council . . ."; and these are the imperialist Governments which live by plunder, and these control the League which will evolve imperialism into "Trusteeship."

One thing remains: "Russia is outside the League, but that is only because she has the ambition to create a world-wide organisation of her own . . ." What does this innocent statement mean?

What else but that the League is here admitted to be the League of Capitalism against the U.S.S.R.? What world-wide organisation other than that of imperialist empires can be imagined except the organisation of world socialism where imperialist contradictions are no more.

There also does Brailsford admit the purpose of the League—the weapon of capitalism against the working class.

Brailsford has long been with capitalism, his position there now is surely complete.

N.C.S.

A MANUAL OF WORLD REVOLUTION.

The Programme of the Communist International. Second Edition. (Modern Books Ltd.) 72 pp. 6d.

IT is a too easily accepted commonplace of the British revolutionary movement that it knows its Marx and Lenin at second-hand. The rank-and-file worker especially has usually no time, even when he has the inclination, to read Marx's three volumes of *Capital* or Lenin's *Empirio-Criticism*. In the circumstances it is unfortunate that those highly important statements of policy, resolutions, and programmes issued by the Communist International are also not given sufficient consideration and study. For they provide the practical application of Marxism and Leninism to the problems of the present-day situation.

Here, for instance, is a second edition of the *Programme of the Communist International*, which was drawn up by the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928 and first published here in 1929. Three years passed before the second edition was called for, although the document is perhaps the most important comprehensive statement of principle, policy and strategy issued by any Marxist party since the Communist Manifesto of 1848. How many revolutionaries have read it, how many have studied it? It makes an excellent textbook for a study group to work with, yet how many groups even of the Communist Party have worked through its sections, and so obtained a thorough groundwork in the basic position of the World Communist Party to which they belong?

The whole theory and practice of Communism is expounded in just over sixty pages. The "Programme" begins with a fundamental yet succinct analysis of the development of society down to the era of imperialism. The laws of growth and decline of capitalist society are restated in terms of dialectical materialism, in terms of Marxist-Leninist principle. The development of the general crisis of capitalism, the part played in that crisis by the world war, and the initiation of the first phase (Russia, China, Hungary, Bavaria, &c.) of world revolution are demonstrated to be still further proof of the accuracy of Communist theory. The struggles of capitalism to achieve stability, the futility of those struggles and the inevitability of the revolutionary collapse of this outworn system are dealt with. What is to take the place of this system? How is its place to be taken? Such questions are continually being asked. The chapter on the ultimate aim of world communism provides ample material for their answer, and could serve of itself as the basis of constructive study and application.

Of great importance, especially for the present time when the workers are seeking a revolutionary way out but are held back by the cold douches of the socialists in no time, is the chapter on the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. Why is the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary? What are the intermediate steps which must be taken when the workers seize control? What form of organisation needs to be set up to effectuate that control and to ensure the speediest possible development of socialist economy? These and other problems of the first period after the seizure of power are elucidated on the basis of the successful experience of Soviet Russia and the failures of other countries, parties and groups. In this chapter too the immediate measures that will be necessary in the various types of countries are specified, and pages 26 to 30 could be taken as a model for a communist election, or general, manifesto. The questions of the positions of classes, of mass organisations, of the cultural revolution, and in two sections the various types of revolution in oppressor and colonial countries are all thoroughly discussed here.

One chapter alone would admit of considerable alteration to-day. The chapter on the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. was written at the beginning of the Five-Year Plan, and outlines achievements in the Soviet Union down to 1928. To-day this part of the chapter could be revised in the light of the far greater achievements, especially of collectivisation, of the past four years. Such necessary revision of a party programme is in the sharpest contrast to that of the pseudo-Marxists who have spent their lives in revising Marx in accordance with the needs of their capitalist masters.

In a final chapter the strategy and tactics necessarily arising out of the conclusions reached in the foregoing chapters are discussed, and the lines on which Communist Parties must proceed are clearly laid down. The paragraphs on the difference in party policy at times of revolutionary rise or stagnation, for instance, deserve especially careful study. An appendix gives the statutes of the International.

To attempt to quote from a brochure in which every sentence is of importance, and not only for itself, but in relation to its context, would be futile. One can only repeat that no revolutionary worker can justifiably neglect the study of this manual of revolution, but should read it in conjunction with the theses of the International, issued at various times since 1928, and especially those of the 12th Plenum now being issued.

Only one criticism of this second edition must be made, but it is a serious one. In the case of such a work, which ought to be in the hands of hundreds of thousands, it is imperative that the text should be accurate, and as clear as crystal. It is evident that some attempt has been made to revise this second edition, and in a number of instances the revision is to the good. But that makes it all the more serious that a number of printers' and other errors to be found in the first edition have been carried over to the second. Not only that, but new errors have crept in. On p. 3 the word "signifies" has been dropped from a sentence, rendering it meaningless. On p. 10 "1923" has been reprinted, when "1925" is the correct date. On p. 16 the first sentence of the first paragraph is unnecessarily obscure. On p. 31 another obviously inaccurate word, so obvious that the least intelligent of proof-readers should have discovered it, has been taken over from the old edition. On p. 35 a printers' error has been taken over. But to compensate quite new ones are to be found on pp. 37, 53, and 55. On page 55 a sentence dropped from the first edition has also been dropped from the second. Was the editor nodding when he passed this? And there are others. Such inattention to details of proof-reading and editing results in a text laying itself open to the usual charge of unintelligibility. It is not good enough that such an important document should have its value vitiated by this maltreatment.

S. G.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

- The Bolshevisation of the Communist Parties by Eradicating the Social Democratic Traditions.* O. Piatnitsky. (Modern Books.) 23 pp. 2d.
- A New Zealand Woman in Russia.* Mrs. H. J. Scott. Friends of the Soviet Union. P.O. Box 1786, Auckland, New Zealand. 19 pp.
- What Next in Germany?* H. Rathbone. (C.P.G.B., 16 King Street, London, W.C.2.) 16 pp. 1d.
- Soviet Education.* Day to Day Pamphlets, No. 12. R. D. Charques. (Hogarth Press.) 48 pp. 1s. 6d.
- Education and the Social Order.* Bertrand Russell. (Allen & Unwin.) 254 pp. 7s. 6d.
- Behind the Scenes at the Disarmament Conference.* Z. Lippay. (Modern Books.) 59 pp. 3d.
- While England Slept.* Rowland James. (John Bale, Sons and Danielsson Ltd.) 249 pp. 6s.
- The London Busmen's Case.* Labour Research Department, 60 Doughty Street, W.C.1. 16 pp. 1d.
- From Capitalism to Socialism.* J. A. Hobson. (The Hogarth Press.) 53 pp. 1s. 6d.
- Leisure in the Modern World.* C. Delisle Burns. 216 pp. 8s. 6d.
- The New Boer War.* Leonard Barnes. (Hogarth Press.) 238 pp. 7s. 6d.
- The National Income.* Colin Clarke, M.A. (Macmillan & Co.) 167 pp. 8s. 6d.
- The Theory of Wages.* J. R. Hicks, M.A., B.Litt. (Macmillan & Co.) 247 pp. 8s. 6d.
- The Greater Britain.* Oswald Mosley. (B.U.F.) 160 pp. 2s. 6d.
- Hungry England.* A. F. Brockway. (Gollanz.) 224 pp. 2s. 6d.
- The Future of Capitalism.* Werner Sombart, LL.D., D.Ph., D.Ps. (Simpkin Marshall.) 47 pp. 1s.
- Public Expenditure.* Federation of British Industries. 6 pp.

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Published by the Proprietors, the Trinity Trust, 7 John Street, W.C.1, and Printed by the Leicester Co-operative Printing Society Limited, 99 Church Gate, Leicester